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THE SMART SET

WILLARD HUNTINGTON WRIGHT, Editor

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THE SMART SET

The Magazine For Minds That Are Not Primitive

THE PURPLE PHANTASM

A Page from the Book of Broadway

By George Bronson-Howard

OBSERVE the beehive—a moth lies dead at its entrance; observe its splendid, gorgeous wings. Yet far from welcoming a beautiful playfellow, the guardians of the gate have straightway stung her to death. Observe that bees are wise, and know that lovely things, like ballet dancers with iridescence: skirts, may have within them that uncleanly spawn that rots out in an hour the lifework of the swarm.

Observe, also, that man is not so wise. Like the bees, he has gates to guard, outposts of the spirit; and if these are left unguarded in the pursuit of wealth or fame, that purple-winged phantasm, Passion, flies through the warderless gate and, in a single moment, a life of palace building is undone. . . .

II

OBSERVE the cases of the boy with pretty eyelashes—of Potter Playfair—Rose Rhett—Guy Bassity, to each of whom, at the brink of success, passion came; and so absorbed had they been in building palaces, they had no time to consider these might be destroyed.

First of all let us consider Rose Rhett; in our Broadway solar system she is the moon round which those satellites, the pretty-eyelashed boy, Playfair, and Bassity—wane or wax.

She was not always of Broadway—she had to come there by wide concurrent orbits. A rowdy open air honkatonk—drunken men throwing dimes and quarters—waiters slipping to her surreptitiously brass checks representing half the price of drinks purchased in her honor—these constituted her first theatrical experience.

More and more the younger generation becomes cognizant that riches and honor are not necessarily allied. Rose Rhett's father had thought so; thus at fifty, after thirty-five years' service in certain mills, discharged for incompetency, he had only a small paid-up insurance policy for income. So Rose must quit her training for that Mecca of all poor, clever girls—a school teacher's place—and work in mills, too. But new ideas were abroad: the newspapers and magazines were pointing out that great fortunes were often less the result of great brains than of mean ones. Socialists shrieked on street corners, giving detailed histories of great financial highwaymen: in these idealistic frenzies overlooking selfishness, the root of most human endeavors: so, instead of their citations teaching men to band together and be brothers as the Socialists imagined they would, they but uncovered for them a new fact—that

honesty was seldom the best policy—if one would be a favorite of the Golden Gods.

Thus Rose Rhett read in her favorite Sunday journals the history of a little dancer who drew two Presidents' salaries for having loved a king; she read of a French *demi-mondaine* who asserted that one President's salary was only sufficient to dress one really smart woman for one year—and many similar statements and stories, granted more space than the greatest scientific discovery—far more admiration being given these light ladies and their famous friends, men who seemed to spend their lives hanging jewels on fair necks; and thus reading, Rose, lying late in her slum bedroom on Sundays, began to regard her hard-working father and mother as mentally deficient for dedicating their pretty daughter to a life of toil.

Each week she would wait eagerly for Sunday's latest stories of fortune's newest favorites, their jewelry, Pomeranian dogs, "bijou houses," sartorial eccentricities, theatrical triumphs; and reading, waited her chance; until one Monday morning she answered a published call for "young ladies to sing and dance."

They were required, it proved, for the summer season at Eureka Park. They must be on duty daily for "vaudeville," two until twelve, and, while singing and dancing, must strive to catch the eyes of as many drink purchasers as possible—for there was no admission fee—and when invited must order no less than twenty-five cents' worth of drink: to encourage which they received on each half the purchase price—the drinks they were commanded to order being water colored with green to pass for *crème de menthe*, and all profit.

No respectable girl could consider the job; as a number of girls told the plain-spoken cigar-chewing owner before departing in dudgeon.

"Don't want 'um respectable," he growled. "But," said Rose, nerving herself, "that's all, isn't it?" He surveyed her in approval. "That's the talk! Sure, it's all, s'far's I'm concerned. There you sit under ten dollars' worth of electricity an hour—as safe as if God had you in His

pocket. But no screaming or fighting jest becuz of an arm around you or a pinch on the cheek. Gi 'em some run for their money—so long as they sit and spend; and a smart, pretty girl like you kin tuck away a half-century every pay night when you cash in your checks. I pays fifteen bucks wages, alone."

Rose had realized, with a sudden inspiration, her superiority to those girls who had insisted on "respectability." Let them run back to their five-dollar-a-week jobs and maybe marry some "hick" making ten or twelve, and sweat and stew in tenements with their dirty brats. The time had passed when "poor but honest," "poor but respectable," had any magic power to move her. They taught ignorant people to be those things, priests and parsons and school teachers did, and then were glad to be invited to dinner with rich people who hadn't been anything of the kind. . . .

Men—that was a woman's job. This Eureka Park affair would be only a stepping stone: she would learn how to face an audience, save some money for good clothes, then betake herself elsewhere. It was better to go to school outside and burst upon Broadway competent, fascinating.

It required just such a strong stimulant to go through what followed. Her first appearance—how weakly she had sung, and how much off key! But someone had shouted at her, encouragingly, that it was "all right, kid"; and his admiring eyes reminded her she was pretty and young and well-shaped, and that her low-cut short-skirted pink dress and her pink silk stockings concealed none of these charms. . . . How hard it had been afterward to thread the long aisles of tables and chairs with those stupid oxen leering at her ankles! But she had set her teeth, and soon the shame was swallowed up by the triumph of easy victory. Even on her first day, she surpassed all Eureka Park records. "Half a century?" With her wages, she was never to pocket less than sixty or seventy; and she received an offer from every visiting manager of burlesque shows—whose custom it is to make the rounds of these summer park "honkatonks" in hopes of

discovering comedians and comely choristers. If they imagined, however, that their shining social superiority and influential powers commanded Rose's admiration, they soon met disconcerting rebuffs.

"I get enough of *that out there*," she panted one night, as she dealt one of these gentlemen a staggering reward for an attempt at familiarity. "I hate men—the whole lot of you!" Indeed, her duties in front, once learned, were accomplished mechanically. She knew the sort of smile, the tone of voice, the veiled half-promise, to set her men a-tingle, causing them to buy drink after drink, crudely imagining her melting under alcoholic influence—drinks Rose learned how to spill dexterously, unnoticed. And she knew how to pick her men. Gay young ribbon clerks and such never became insolvent by spending their Saturday night dollars on her. Fascinating young gentlemen ogled her in vain. She picked the sturdy mechanics and small storekeepers, the dullards and the middle-aged. . . . As her envious companions said, she seemed to "smell money." As a matter of fact the signs were obvious after a little study to anyone with brains; or, at any rate, the signs of those who had none, or who did not mean to spend it; at least among the simple types that frequented Eureka Park. She soon yearned for subtler game.

But she was to find one cannot be game at all and be subtle: the wise and fools are curiously alike in the pursuit of the purple phantasm. . . .

A burlesque show carried her to Broadway. Six months later Potter Playfair told her he was a cave man.

III

"A CAVE man," Mr. Playfair repeated, adding a sort of low growl through the teeth that firmly clenched the cigar. "I go in for elemental things; my plays have *guts—guts*," he added in Roman letters. "I look for motives—raw and bleeding—and I write plays around them. Big red-blooded plays—primitive—primordial."

(He had recently acquired the latter word from the works of the California Kipling.) "Yes, my girl, *primordial*. To hell with conventions!" He smashed them all with a wave of his hand. "To hell with religion, education, colleges—all the things that make mollycoddles. Give me man in the rough. . . . That's the man's way—Playfair's way."

You are to imagine all this out of the same corner of the mouth that held the cigar, the eye above it almost permanently closed, the mouth twisted downward, flattening out the jowls into a heavy chin. You are to imagine clothes of loose, heavy cloth that gave their wearer an appearance of bulk; and, in the street, a sombrero further obscuring that luckless left eye. Rose Rhett seemed to imagine and to admire. Her hands were clasped; her eyes held artless admiration.

"I never met a man like you," she said dreamily.

"And yet—*they* don't understand me," growled Mr. Playfair in a dissatisfied voice. He told her he was then engaged in staging at his own expense a play on which no manager would risk money. "A play about a man like me—a real man. He comes to this effete East" (Mr. Playfair had been born in Troy) "and he makes these mollycoddles jump through hoops. But they don't appreciate it, these managers—they're mollycoddles themselves. . . . I don't know why I'm telling you all this—"

"Isn't there such a thing as people just fitting in?" she asked. "Understanding—well, just naturally—if you know what I mean—"

He regarded her with gloomy preoccupation. "How I need somebody who understands!" he said. "Not vampires—the women who never can understand. . . ."

"I know," said Rose softly. "How glad it makes me to feel I've met a man who understands women! It's so easy for women to deceive most men. But a man like you—a big man—sees through our petty, shallow little brains. . . ." She was quoting liberally from a novel she had read recently.

"Some are not petty. Some—" But

the great thought could not find ready words. "Some understand," he compromised vaguely.

"Some," was her wistful response, "yes, but oh, how few! And when men meet *them*, they're so soured by the others they don't trust them, don't give them their due. Not that I am complaining. It isn't the men's fault." . . . And feeling she had gone far enough for the moment, she asked him quickly about rehearsals.

"I'm going to let her understudy the lead," he told his stage director when that worthy opened reproachful eyes at this superfluous expense. "She's got *brains*—we need somebody in the company with brains."

Really, he was just as easily handled as the others, this first famous man of her acquaintance. Famous? "Lucky" was a better word. What had Mr. Playfair that any average man had not?

IV

HER question was well put. It was the trade, not the man. Others had seen fit to study the mechanics of steam engineering, gas fitting, plumbing. Mr. Playfair had learned instead the mechanics of the stage, and successful plays are more apt to be a question of mechanics than of genius: jobs better suited to commonplace men than extraordinary ones who have ideas that play sad havoc with the self-satisfaction of the *bourgeoisie*.

One of Mr. Playfair's early sorrows had been that he was conventional of conduct and appearance—that he liked the things everybody liked. But the growth of his literary ambitions changed all this. It was then that Mrs. Playfair, a quiet little woman with a habit of babies, had developed vampirish instincts—failing to conceal from him a deadly sense of humor, urging that a large sombrero was funny upon a short man with fat legs; begging him to have a care how he scowled and spoke harshly to car conductors, who, not knowing their new importance, carried them past their block; or to restless but heavily built men who

jostled them in crowds—other malefactors; pointing out in a most disparaging tone that his hands were too soft to give a good account of themselves at fisticuffs.

At which he would frown heavily upon her, and flattening his jowls upon his collar to thicken his naturally thin voice, would speak malevolently, cruelly, of the surgical operation he would perform upon them. And, next time, his voice would be fiercer in its scorn of the offender. Soon he came to dislike nothing so much as her quiet smile; with his first royalties, removing himself from his bookkeeper's high stool, his native town, her and his four children—who knew him afterward only as a holiday visitor and a writer of inadequate cheques.

In New York, he had no wife to give him uneasiness as to the possible puerility of his personal prowess, to check a flow of romantic imagination in attire and accounts of adventure; nor had anyone there been a schoolmate and licked him for tattling to teacher or correcting the vagaries of luck at marbles. He was able to work unhindered at the greatest character in his gallery of creations—Potter Playfair, the Cave Man.

V

ROSE, meanwhile, had been getting ready for him. Her intimate experience with men had begun early after her Broadway arrival. She had struck town at an ill moment for engagements—just after the last wave of autumn productions had washed to the feet of the Christmas trees and before those of the early spring were about to go into rehearsal. Only a few musical pieces were getting ready, and these could choose from the survivors of all the season's shipwrecks; what chance for a girl with no Broadway acquaintance and without a good singing voice? But before her small savings left from the purchase of striking-looking millinery had vanished, she had learned of the Actors' Club on a street in the forties, and had removed her belongings to a hotel opposite; in a lobby window of which, on the day of her hegira, we see her—a cat at a mouse-hole; and, when-

ever there passed from the club entrance opposite a player whom she recognized from published photographs as well known in musical comedy, she might be observed to hasten forth and pass that player; after which she betrays no haste at all. The first actor looks curious, half starts toward her at her shop window; perhaps the fact that the window contains jewelry causes reconsideration. The second, though she does not frown at his steady stare—is it that he remembers that speech, without the acquaintance of the lady spoken to, is considered a heinous crime by police judges? . . . And, for this reason or another, all the others failed to figure as Lotharios, and, late in the afternoon, as she returned for the eighth time to her crow's nest, she was reduced to bowing boldly to a boy with long eyelashes but unknown to her by photographic fame, who had only the doubtful prestige of being seen quitting the club.

"How do you do, Mr. Cassell?"—the address and the bow of one slightly acquainted. She was too pretty to have such a misconception of his identity, so he hastened to explain and to "hope that is no handicap." But, no—she couldn't think of it . . . she could sink right through the ground for her stupid blunder . . . if he was a gentleman he would immediately leave her. . . .

They dined together daily after that; but she knew there was another woman from the fact that the boy always chose out-of-the-way restaurants; because when she had suggested he use his influence to place her in the piece in which he would soon begin rehearsals, he had quickly hastened to assure her the piece was impossible—he wouldn't have her waste her time—it was a certain sour one—would set critical teeth on edge.

In nowise deceived, she soon forced him to confess that the female to be starred liked his long eyelashes. So there was nothing to do but, on the night of this revelation, to give herself quite deliberately, and without the slightest passion; but crying aloud in a choking voice that he must not persuade her . . . that it was unfair to take advantage because

he knew of her love for him . . . she had not thought he was that sort of a man.

The next day, the boy threw to the winds the "sure fire" part that would have won him golden opinions from the majority of those critical gentlemen who think actors write their own parts. After a scene as dramatic as in any play—an actor and an actress let loose on an "I love another" scene, he rang down the curtain on a no longer youthful favorite of the public prostrate on a sofa; hieing him from thence to agencies, where, having some little reputation, he was engaged for a commonplace juvenile in a Viennese operetta, in which, as Rose had intimated, they could be together—"dearest." Before signing his contract, he made "dearest" a proviso.

Through him, Rose met the actors and managers of his acquaintance: no more out-of-the-way places now, but Curate's and Sydenham's, where she could learn to know celebrities by their nicknames. But, it appeared, luck had deserted the pretty boy, who laid it, superstitiously, at the door of his ingratitude to the lady who had given him his chance when an amateur, his first chance: had advanced him by rapid stages, and . . .

"Why don't you go back to your old lady then?" Rose would ask scornfully; and in wild despair—for his inamorata's love grew cold as his ill-luck increased—he would poetize wildly and dramatically: the world well lost with her in his arms . . . such things must atone for the utter failure of the operetta after eight weeks' rehearsals and nineteen consecutive performances; atone for his failure to obtain other paying work, for the abnormal hit his successor had achieved with the discarded part, and the rumor that he would soon be co-starred with the discarded lady.

Rose was glad when the exigencies of the privy purse took him to the only opening—a stock "lead" in Louisville. No, she would not go with him "and be a burden"; she must find a position for herself and he must "save"; and they would be reunited and solvent in the autumn. He wrote her a hundred despairing folios; and, until she met Playfair

and because the room rent must be paid, she answered daily.

The pretty boy never got back to Broadway: his actorial pride prevented taking on unimportant juveniles again, he who had been the object of the Louisville matinee girls' admiration. The purple phantasm had met him in mid-ocean:—he must thereafter be a Flying Dutchman who could never make the right shore.

VI

CORRESPONDINGLY, it was so with Potter Playfair. Given another year unimpeded by personal distractions, he would have been wealthy. The tide of just his kind of middle-class melodrama was high, and he rode on the early wavelets. The failure of his "social drama"—the invasion of Fifth Avenue by the hairy man—would have taught him not to produce plays deemed impossible by all managers; those gentlemen being fair judges of the sort of mediocrity that will make much money. Chastened, he would have returned to his melodrama and to other men's ideas; but, as it was, he had a further handicap: an unknown girl upon whom he insisted as the leading lady; and when the new piece was given a provincial try-out with her, and she demonstrated she needed years of experience, the man behind the bank-roll gave as ultimatum another leading lady or no New York premiere—provoking Playfair into his celebrated cave man portrayal and an offer to buy back the production rights, thus becoming his own producer again.

Rose had realized the justice of the manager's contention: realized the play was as saffron as any of the Fourteenth Street tribe; realized that there had been only a temporary revival of interest in such pieces, the public having sickened of "problems" and imitations of Oscar Wilde; realized, because she read the leading periodicals for "culture," that a nugget of cheap sensation could be so polished with realistic acting, gorgeous scenery and lights that it would seem virgin gold. It was to ride in the wake of the original discoverer of this fact that

a manager had accepted Playfair's first play, put an expert craftsman to work teaching the author to give rubber stamp villains and heroes natural dialogue, and had engaged an all-star cast. So with the other Playfair successes.

Rose knew this new one was utterly impossible with an amateur leading lady and other actors such as Playfair would engage: he saw no necessity for expensive protagonists—"the village choir can give 'Down on the Suwanee River,'" was his favorite contention. So it was with utter selfishness that she encouraged his insurgency. She knew the average newspaper critic would blame the play; not a pretty girl; meanwhile her pictures as leading lady would adorn theater and hotel lobbies and magazine covers, would be reproduced in every illustrated periodical in the country. Fame! Worth dollars, too. Let the play fail—which it accordingly did.

But for a few weeks on the strength of his former hits it drew small audiences, and Playfair kept paying losses and advertising it widely as the "season's first success"—"with Rose Rhett in her great impersonation of Selina Slue"—this latter at her insistent demands: any demand of hers was law to the cave man.

He was no longer, however, the cave man with her. Once he had welcomed the purple phantasm, she had ceased to be the woman who "understood." True, she still salved his pride by pretending to believe in his greatness and in his primitiveness—that cost nothing, and she knew hurt vanity was a terrible enemy to usurping phantasms. But she allowed him no assurance of a lifelong love, showing decided interest in the leading man of the company, answering vivaciously letters from a more noted brother author, encouraging a reporter who came to interview her. Also she smiled when well known citizens occupied boxes—and often they sent her flowers and candy, which Playfair would pitch into the stage door alley, grinding his teeth and tearing at his scanty hair. He even went so far as to discharge the leading man and threaten the reporter.

All of which made it easy for Rose to

feather her nest. She impressed on him that much jewelry could hang about her neck if she listened to the importunities of admiring box occupants. She called his attention to the motor cars of other girls: how cheerfully would a certain manufacturer bestow one on her were she his instead of Playfair's. She told of an utterly fictitious offer of a large salary from a Chicago manager—this, she encouraged Playfair to think, a preparatory step to more personal offers. Thus, in addition to the expense money for their joint apartment, her modiste's, milliner's and other bills, Rose soon had many huge solitaires, always convertible into cash, her car, and savings accounts in several banks. And Playfair strained personal credit to the breaking point.

Worst of all—for this held no return for expenditure—his wife had sued him at the height of his earning capacity, naming Rose as correspondent; and had been adjudged alimony founded on the income of those years when he had successful plays running. Whereas, now, he had none. All in all, he knew he would be a bankrupt unless some desperate *coup* were made. Yet he had neither the inspiration, the confidence nor the time to write another play. And he could write only plays. Hearing him, night after night, groaning by her side, watching him in the early morning hours sit by the open window, head between his palms, Rose saw she was killing the golden egg layer; and, while his sufferings moved her not in the least, this goose was valuable and must live. Giving the matter urgent thought, she suggested vaudeville: Miss Rose Rhett, late star of "The Heart of the Wolf," in "So-and-So-So-and-So," the first contribution to vaudeville of the famous playwright, Potter Playfair, author of those successes of the century, "Mated with an Eagle," "Iron Hands," "Red Blood and Blue," etc., etc. The luster of his name was not yet dimmed with vaudeville audiences; the act would command a high price; she would be able to impress them with her own fame through the mere juxtaposition of Playfair's name and hers. A success—and she knew her lack

of art would be no handicap here—she had only to be careful to select conventional heroics or coarse comedy construction by vaudeville "sure fire" authors; and she could continue at a high salary, without any further assistance.

VII

VAUDEVILLE audiences had just progressed to the point of appreciating the discarded fashions of the legitimate stage, when misfortune turned to other business and let Playfair alone for a while. The playlet that would have been laughed off by Playfair's former audiences created a sensation with his new one; but Rose was considered more responsible than he, and was approached by many booking agents with flattering offers. So at last she had accomplished her purpose: she was no longer dependent upon anyone's favor; she could sign tomorrow contracts for two years' continuous booking. In vaudeville it is names that count; material is easily obtained from any number of words-and-music mongers who can write sure fire stuff for their unintelligent audiences in a purely perfunctory manner; the difficulty is to do the accidental thing that will make the hit and command the salary. . . . She no longer needed Playfair nor anyone.

And, for the first time since that Monday morning when she went to Eureka Park instead of to the mills, she relaxed. She was tired of posing, tired of being a lady, weary of pretending affection every time she wanted a new hat, fed up with listening sympathetically to ambitions and affectations in order to negotiate an extra amount of spending money; had had enough of calculating the effect of every word, gesture, action, . . . everything, as a matter of business. Now that she had achieved her ambition, she wanted pleasure. Before, she could do nothing that would offend the ethics of men. Now that she had no need to transmute their admiration into bank accounts, they could think what they liked; and she plunged into pleasure as boldly as she had into business,

overlooking no possibilities, playing now for the attention of the sort of males whom, hitherto, she had avoided—those attractive to the women of Advertisement Alley because of notorious reputations, handsome faces, evil minds. Eluding Playfair on all possible occasions, she accompanied them to the town's hidden dissipations—the rathskellers where are forbidden dances and songs, where people speak openly, even proudly, of forbidding vices: back rooms where cocaine and heroin circulate as freely as beer: all this she found novel and amusing. She—in a phrase—yearned for thrills.

Poor Playfair realized none of this iniquity—only knew that her usual hour for returning home was approximating daybreak. Then one morning she was absent from breakfast, and he did not see her until she reported at the matinee; when, in desperation and dismay, he relapsed into a frayed cave man portrayal; which was greeted with mirth long concealed. A painful scene ensued, in which she saw a naked soul—and what a poor pitiful thing it was; so poor and pitiful that she forgave him his bad man's sombrero, the cigar between clenched teeth, the flattening of jowls for heavy chin and voice. The poor fellow had done all these things for fear someone would discover he had a woman's soul.

But now that he was to lose her, all the barriers went down; and she saw the boy who had run to mother, who had taken vengeance for the insults and rough treatment of other boys by writing tales of knightly prowess and bloody adventure, in all of which he, the hero, made short work of his cowardly enemies: saw the little man who had continued those dreams on a bookkeeper's stool and at night had lived them and put them into plays; who had at length timidly ventured to create out of his own poor clay one of the characters he had ever longed to be.

In his boyhood, when he had come wildly weeping to his mother's knee, she had wiped away the tears and taken him into her arms. But there was no one now, and: "Oh, God!" he sobbed. "Oh, God! Oh, God!"

And then: "I'll do anything . . . only tell me . . . anything. I'll work twice as hard—I'll give you everything. Only, don't leave me—oh, for God's sake don't—don't, don't leave me! Rose, my Rose, mine, you can't be so cruel when I love you so . . ."

And, in the end, "Oh, God!" he shrieked, throwing himself down full length before her. "Oh, God! . . . Oh, God!! Oh, God!!!"

It was eight months later that she, face downward on a bed in a London hotel, her rifled jewel box and ravished purse nearby, shrieked out just these same words.

VIII

GUY BASSITY, the rifler and ravisher, had made a business of women just as she had of men; and, searching for someone who would lead her into that wonderland of the senses of which she had seen so much written, heard so much talk—Rose had been attracted to him by the stories of his fascination: how a famous prima donna had succumbed at a single meeting, how some young heiress had to be sent away to keep Mr. Bassity out of the family—while, for ordinary conquests, there were a dozen women of Rose's acquaintance who telephoned in vain. She had been intensely proud that she had been seen with him three nights running. Then she became one of the brigade of reproachful telephoners. Ever and again he would relent and come to a special dinner at her apartment; but finally he told her frankly he could not afford theaters and restaurants. As she made no comment on this, he came no more to dinner; until she bethought herself in desperation to explain that she had engaged theater seats. Finding this effectual, she loaned him her purse and suggested supper afterward. Whereupon, he became immediately gay, convulsed her with cynical stories and impressed upon her his weariness of women.

Perhaps the purple phantasm, lurking at the guarded gate, got its first chance to wedge in its way when Rose determined she would show Sir Egotist that

here was one with whom he would not get the chance to grow weary. Then tears of humiliation when he bade her good night at the down stairs door resolved her to make him love her desperately, then to discard him as coolly as she had Playfair. How she would laugh then at this self-proclaimed conqueror of women!

And, as a result, she now lay weeping in that London hotel. What easy game she had been for him; what insults she had endured, what blows; with every one loving him more fiercely, willing to accede to anything sooner than that the other eagerly waiting women—of whom he never forbore telling her—should snatch him away. For Bassity—although he bore no resemblance to a cave man, being instead rather foppish in appearance—knew how to arouse in women the same terror that the character Playfair portrayed so badly had aroused in his mate. Nothing was too evil if it proved him their master: no speech was too harsh, no oath too vile, no blow too hard, to teach them not to contest him in either word or deed. He beat down the bulwarks of their self-esteem and made them think themselves even less important than they were: while correspondingly increasing their belief in his superiority; moreover, he knew instinctively that a woman feels some of the passionate pain of childbirth in the blows of her beloved. He knew all these things, not that he was by nature masterful, but because he had enough of the feminine in his own nature to know unerringly what they thought and why they thought it: paying small attention to anything said or done, as indexes of character.

So, when he struck Rose the first time and she had screamed out her hatred and bade him never to speak to her again, he had smiled and gone his way; and in a few hours she was telephoning, to find he was not at his rooms. The picture of him in another woman's arms had arisen to her tortured brain: had stood between her and sleep. To banish it, she took the one chance of disapproval: telephoned every restaurant, café, rathskeller and "joint" he frequented; and, finally lo-

cating him, wept tears of thankfulness. So he returned to her, knowing he was master at last. . . . Strange that Rose did not see he was pursuing almost precisely the same policy as hers with Playfair. But, just as the purple phantasm had banished the playwright's brain then, now it was hers that was banished; passion sees nothing, understands nothing.

Bassity had finally tired of her just as she had of Playfair; but he had been less pitiless: had gone while she was at the theater, leaving gaping purse and empty jewel box to tell its own story—he had advised her not to bank her salary when they came to England but to keep it in cash until their return to America, saving exchange rates; and he had persuaded her not to take her jewels to the theater—she must remember how dressing-rooms were robbed: all this in anticipation of a "getaway" when the amount of cash should be large enough. And, while she sobbed out her "My God! my God!" Bassity was on the Dover boat headed for Calais and Paris.

IX

MOST *voyageurs* have a hazy idea that when they have visited Maxim's and the Abbaye, they have exhausted all nocturnal Parisian possibilities. Really, the Abbaye is the thing only directly after the theater, then Fysshers, Maxim's around three, and afterward there are the rowdy ones. Bassity knew this much, and the early morning of the next day—he had left on a matinee train—found him in the Royale, chuckling over his new freedom and a plentifully provided future. The scene suited his unruly emotions. He had no longer to play the superior person, to profess a lack of interest in pleasure. Here he could give way to any fancy; he was unknown, surrounded by just the sort of women he liked best, whom he could have and discard at will, with whom he need play no game. He might drink deeply, too—a sensation he loved; but always he had conquered it when on business bent: a drunken man says endearing things; fool-

ish things; betrays himself; lacks masterfulness.

In New York, when he had wanted so to indulge, he had slipped away to lower resorts than those in the Broadway ken; and, among the women frequenters of such places, was considered a good investment. He knew and rather enjoyed this; pretending to believe in their endearments and in their sad stories; perfectly conscious of their attempts to rob him; checkmating them with glee, even in his drunkenest moments; and, when he bade them good night, with a drunken laugh sent his love to "Bert" or "Ed." . . .

He had not intended on the night of his arrival to dissipate: it had been too late to hire a safety deposit box, and he had his treasures upon his person; to hand them over to the safe keeping of a *concierge*, a hall porter, was too risky for one who had, if anything, too low an estimate of the price a man's honesty could withstand. But, having heard of Apaches, he had secured himself against such by having a policeman pick him a chauffeur guaranteed, one who had stood the test of years on that Capucines corner; and that chauffeur had been told to wait at every place visited: he was waiting outside the Royale now.

Bassity had heard of Apaches, yes, just as other Americans had heard of "gunmen": conceptions at which he had often sneered and at their inspiration, pictures in popular magazines of low lurking fellows, collarless, unshaven. Yet he was willing to believe in the French Apache pictures, in the corduroy-skirted, bandanna-bloused girls, their men with red neckerchiefs and heavily visored caps drawn low. Consequently, it never occurred to him to suspect that the cabaret dancer he admired, and her poetical-looking admirer, were down on Monsieur the Prefect's list as of that tribe.

She was Spanish—just as the tango dancer at the Café de Paris was South American: he being from Brooklyn, she from Belleville. She was not there to capture men except so far as they might be encouraged to contribute to her plate, to pay for her supper and champagne.

Puinpinese's poetry sought to be like Villon's in all but the "Grosse Margot" period; he was dainty as to what money he took. So, although she danced before Bassity's table in hope of more than ordinary contribution, she had had her supper, and she shook her head at the invitation of the second glass he had the waiter fill. Bassity observed then that an exception had been made in favor of the poetical-looking chap—the custom being that wine must be served, a custom complied with at all tables except where stood the poet's absinthe; from which it was easy for one acquainted with the etiquette of fast society to deduce their relationship.

Which made it all the better—to snatch her away and force her to pretend sudden infatuation for a stranger, all the while racked lest "dearest" console himself with arms ever welcoming—Bassity knew all women believe "dearest" is desperately desired by others most fascinating: a delusion "dearest" does his best to promote and preserve.

He had a savage pleasure in the knowledge that the mere sight of his wealth would bring about this triangle, these conflicting emotions. To watch their working-out, all the while pretending stupidly to believe in her: to force her to laughter and dancing and embracing when her heart was heavy; these things were what he would have described as "water on his wheel" . . . and so was ostentatious about calling back the waiter to pay him, displaying a large packet of English banknotes before he drew out a handful of gold.

Had he seen the poet's knee knock against hers at that moment, Bassity might have reconsidered. He was going on the theory of appearances, which he would never have done in his own country where he knew savage clubbers of citizens at elections, professional thugs in political pay, who often wore eyeglasses and silk shirts; the Playfairs were more apt to look like pirates. But the poet make-up was associated in his mind with peaceable—nay, piffing—instincts. He did not know that in Belleville bars the Villon legend persists: that even the Parisian lower classes have a genuine ap-

preciation of, and pride in, their national literature, and that poetry often inflames them into desperate deeds, even into revolutions.

He had once defined a "sucker" as one who played another man's game. He did not realize he was now doing just that. The purple phantasm had lured him into imagining, for all their different language and customs, he could read nature as readily here as in his own country—a belief responsible for the wealth of "wire-tappers," who would be immediately distrusted by many victims if their profession had really anything to do with tapping wires.

As a result of his carelessly displayed wealth, a conversation ensued between poet and dancer, carried on at first in tones so very low that not even those nearby could hear; but the frown on the poet's face assured Bassity of the correctness of his analysis; and, when their voices rose high enough to be heard, anyone knowing the *argot* would have understood that the poet's frown, now a scowl, was significant of his speech, the dancer's anxious half-smile of pleading, also. Followed a furious quarrel and the poet's departure; then, as the firebrand had foretold, she came to him with a forced smile and put an arm around his neck: her voice declaring adoringly that he was "*très chic*," with many little affectionate slang phrases: "*petit cochon*"—"méchant"—"*petit chameau*". . . finally yielding to his importunities. But he must wait until her time was up: she must dance every quarter-hour until four.

Then, because of her position at the place, her gentle ways, her choice of a poet lover, Bassity, who hated waste, perceived it was useless to pay his cabman to wait any longer, so descended and dismissed him; and, an hour or so later, descended again, entering a cab that came forward at the sight of the pair.

Once within, Bassity gave himself utterly into the purple phantasm's arms. One who has degraded all the natural instincts into servants of his will must need something evil to rouse him; and it was the thought that the girl hated him because of the quarrel with her lover, yet

must conceal this and do his will, that thrilled him into a savage ecstasy; and he seized her roughly, hurting her arms with his clutch, shouting at her ugly English words, commanding her in bad French to say she loved him better than the poet, that she hated the poet, that she would do anything her conqueror asked; and, when she had obeyed, he laughed brutally and shouted in a harsh, cruel voice, pinching her bare arms until she cried out in pain and the driver craned his neck to look in.

He deposited them in a street that coiled up like a great snake at the foot of a great church: a narrow street of many windings, shuttered shop fronts, the entrances of arched courts here and there: a dark, depressing, dank and dirty street; but Bassity was too full of his evil vision to heed. He followed her into one of the arched entrances, into darkness. . . . The blow that blotted out his senses came upon him while he was chuckling over a new and uglier fancy—a picture never to be painted.

"Sacred mother of a blue camel!" said the poet excitedly, as, after transferring the banknotes and gold to his pockets, the patch of shaded light from his pocket torch revealed the contents of the chamois bag about Bassity's neck—pure white rays, deep blue and ruby red. . . .

"All single stones, absolutely not to be traced," gasped the cabman; while the dancer shrieked her shock.

The poet buffeted her head against the wall of the archway, calmly, as one who does his duty. Understanding her fault, she wiped away the blood from her mouth, unprotesting. The light disappeared while poet and cabman cogitated. In the darkness, one could hear the girl shiver as though she read their sinister thoughts.

"But this is different, quite," said the poet finally. "To regain such jewels, he will go to his consulate, even to his ambassador—"

"We should have left him to revive," urged the cabman defensively; "as to the money, he could prove nothing. He had too much wine; who knows what he spent? And he slipped down in his

THE SMART SET

drunkenness and she left him. The scandal would cost him more than he has lost. But not more than these jewels.

... Therefore ...

"Don't . . . don't," begged the girl.

"Don't, Raoul, don't."

"And I will be locked up because I'm your friend, *hein?*" snarled the poet.

"Then when they are returned it is New Caledonia. And not returned, it is to drag away months, maybe a year, in the Force or the Madeleine. No!"

"Oh, don't, Raoul!" sobbed the girl. He swung at her blindly this time, driving her down to her knees. "A franc—

a sou," he demanded, harshly, stretching out his hand to the other man, who felt for him in the darkness, complying.

"Choose," said the poet. The cabman called his choice, thickly, and the light flashed on the poet's palm, showing a copper piece, lying face upward.

"Your luck," snarled the poet; and the light winked again and showed that he was kneeling near Bassity's upturned face, on which a blue lump was thrusting itself outward, tightening the skin of the forehead. . . .

"Oh, don't, don't, Raoul!" sobbed the kneeling, crouching girl. But the poet's right hand was busy with the pocket torch, and the other held that with which he did not care to discipline her—not then. As it shot downward, the light went out again.

A little later, a huge, shapeless mass moved through the dark of the Bois: two men carrying from a cab another whose knees dragged the ground and who was flung into a thicket to lie face downward. But he could not cry out to God, nor to any other thing.

Now if human beings were only bees . . .



THE MOWERS

By D. H. Lawrence

THERE'S four men mowing down by the river;
I can hear the sound of the scythe strokes, four
Sharp breaths swishing:—yea, but I
Am sorry for what's i' store.

The first man out o' the four that's mowin'
Is mine: I mun claim him once for all;
—But I'm sorry for him, on his young feet, knowin'
None o' the trouble he's led to stall.

As he sees me bringin' the dinner, he lifts
His head as proud as a deer that looks
Shoulder-deep out o' th' corn: and wipes
His scythe blade bright, unhooks

His scythe stone, an' over the grass to me!
—Lad, tha's gotten a childt in me,
An' a man an' a father tha'lt ha'e to be,
My young slim lad, an' I'm sorry for thee.

THE FLAXFIELD

By Mrs. Cheever-Meredith

CATHERINE HERVY lay staring at the low ceiling above her bed. She was occupied with the reflection that she had fallen into the vice of self-pity, when she suddenly found an interest in the odor of hot coffee as it stole up the narrow stairway of the *jagdhaus*.

She knew that old Christine, the gamekeeper's wife, was busy with the simple breakfast she had asked to have at dawn. Springing up, she felt her way to the window and opened the shutter.

The valley seemed a lake, and the mountains of the Odenwald rose like islands from its low-lying fogs.

Turning away, Catherine hastily dressed.

She would find her tub upon the balcony later, after a return from the forest which called her. Woolen stockings, heavy rubber-soled shoes, a gray knitted jacket, a belt for cartridges were quickly assumed. Her felt hat and light rifle were below.

She clambered down the narrow stairs, clinging to the rope at the side of the wall. Old Christine, slyly amused at the Englishwoman and her ways, offered her coffee, some cold saddle of roebuck, some bread and yellow cheese. Peter, the gamekeeper, brought her rifle with an imperturbable air and gave her the cartridges, which she fitted into her belt. Each morning he did this, knowing that she would shoot nothing.

Intoxicated by the splendor of the morning, she wandered further than she had ventured upon other days, and found herself following a path which led round and round a hill, until finally it reached a flaxfield, which lay upon the height like an enormous green blanket.

There one could not see the declivities which led down to the valley, nor was the place overlooked by any height in its vicinity. The more distant purple mountains only overtopped it.

Leaving her gun, she walked through the tender plants until she came to a depression in the field, a sunken hollow several feet below the surface.

She dropped upon her knees, and crouching until her head was on a level with the tiny waving leaves on the flax, she thrust her face close in among the pale green stems and gazed through their intricate weavings as if in a fairy forest.

Often during the last few weeks she had lain in similar nooks, sleeping for hours, alone, hidden, far from the world of which she had so early tired. She coiled herself around as an animal does within the nest the place afforded her. She stared up at the sky, turning flat upon her back, her hands beneath her dark head, from which the hat had fallen.

The green leaves of the flax waved softly about her. It was morning in the world, and she felt its influence enter her soul where the shadows were. For there was a something crouching within her memory from which her thoughts took flight like a flock of scared birds, an ugly thing which she could not recall but which she feared.

Here she need not think. Oh, it was good to lie so and let the sun shine and the wind blow, and to see nothing—nothing but the sky!

II

THEN her ear caught the sound of footsteps. She listened drowsily.

She heard two men talking. The

voices drew nearer, and became angry, expostulating. Some doe had trampled—had made its *lager*—its lair—in the fine young flax.

Catherine rose, slim and defiant, in defense of the doe.

"It was I," she called. "Sorry! I did not know that this was your field, Herr von Altishofen!"

The keeper said in a low voice: "It is the mad lady from the Göben *jagdhaus*, Herr Baron—the sister of the Gräfin."

"So!" replied Altishofen in the same tone.

Then, as he threw away a cigarette, he cried to Catherine: "I regret very much that I have had the misfortune to disturb you, Miss Hervy!" He spoke English with precision and with no apparent difficulty.

The keeper stared. So the Herr Baron knew the mad lady!

"I really thought that the field was Göben's," said the girl composedly, and made no further apology.

Altishofen had met Catherine Hervy before, but, strangely enough, had not known that she was the sister of the Gräfin von Göben. After a hunt at Weimar, each had been one of a breakfast party at the lodge of the Prince. At another time he had seen her in a box at a *reilkonkurrenz* in Frankfurt. He had met her last during the race week at Baden, in August—now nine months past. He had parted from her after a ball, and found her again in his flaxfield.

Seen as then, in the sunlight, her beauty seemed extraordinary, and he wondered that he had not fully appreciated it before. There was that peculiar glow of ruddy color beneath the skin which Chabas gives to his young bathing girls.

"It is flax, is it not?" she asked, turning to look back at the field she had invaded.

"Yes. In a few weeks it will be in full bloom."

"The flax blossoms are very pretty, I have heard."

She stood beside him, perfectly at ease. The young woman appeared to feel herself held by no conventional reasons for

being, seeming, doing this or that. Yet this self-possession had nothing aggressive about it. It was rather an absence of self-consciousness.

"You have never seen a field in bloom?" he asked.

"No."

"A flaxfield in bloom is as blue as—the sky," he ended lamely.

He had been looking at her eyes, and she knew that she had narrowly escaped a compliment. She observed for the first time that his were blue also. His lashes, eyebrows and hair were pale and bleached by the sun.

He seemed abstracted, abashed to find himself feeling a certain amount of sentiment in this casual conversation with a pretty woman over a flaxfield. He turned to find the keeper sulkily regarding him.

Catherine looked about for her rifle.

"What are you looking for?" Altishofen asked.

"My gun."

"You shoot?"

He was surprised that he had not thought of it. He joined her in her search, stooping to thrust aside the tall grasses and flax.

"No. I am a *posense*. I need the excuse the gun gives me. It explains me to the woodcutters—to the peasants—as well as to the keepers. I roam for hours about forest and fields with a pleasure you may not understand—" She hesitated.

"But I understand," said Altishofen eagerly. "I, too, like to roam aimlessly! Ah, here it is!" He pulled the weapon from the flax, and examined it.

As they stood, other steps became audible, and a youth appeared whose entire aspect proclaimed him a creature of arrested brain development. His height was that of a lad of thirteen years, while his facial expression was that of a young child. Upon seeing Catherine he began to shake his head roguishly, pointing first at her and then to the *lager* in the field.

He muttered some words, then stood shyly staring at the Baron.

"He has come after me," said Catherine. "It is the gamekeeper's son. He

is an innocent, who has taken a strange fancy to me. He follows me about like a dog."

She turned, walking slowly down the hillside, and the nobleman, after dismissing the keeper, went with her, carrying the gun. They were followed by the fool.

"Eitel is very kind and lives happily, aside from those hours when he finds stains of blood in the forest. He has a horror of the hunters, and loves all the wild things."

They approached the edge of the older forest. Their footsteps seemed to invade a silence which had awaited them for years.

"Göben is here?" he asked after a little.

"He was. He went away last week. My sister returned with him to Cassel."

Altshofen wondered why he had never known that Miss Hervy was the sister of the Gräfin von Göben.

The night of the ball he had seen them together, but had believed the girl to be merely one of the English guests the family had so often with them. Yet he felt, confusedly, that he had known that the Gräfin had a sister. Why was he so sure of that fact now? What was it—the thing like an echo—which repeated the words, "the sister of the Gräfin von Göben," as if they possessed a significance in his memory which he was unable to recall?

"I had never heard of your being at Göben's shoot."

"It is my first visit."

"Your sister never comes here?"

"Not often. Karl comes alone, or with other men."

"We last met at Baden. Is it not so? After we had danced, my friend Wildnar and I said good night to you on the terrace of the Stephanie. You wore a white wrap with frills hanging over your face."

"Yes."

"And you—are stopping alone—at the *jagdhaus*?"

Catherine reflected upon his very German curiosity, and thought that the character of his face had changed since she had last seen him. He appeared less cold, and far more youthful.

"Yes, alone; attended only by the head keeper's wife," she said, amused at his evident consternation.

"I see. A whim?"

"No, a resolve. I wished to see what it would be like to be alone. I had never been alone. I fancied that I should like it, and I do. I have found a condition of inertia which agrees with me. I am tired of civilization."

She was amused by his evident astonishment.

He pondered, wondering upon this English girl. He had never liked the English. He had found them all eccentric.

"Aren't the days long? Doesn't time drag?"

"I have stopped the *jagdhaus* clock, and have forbidden old Christine to speak of time. I left my watch at Cassel. For some weeks I shall not need to know the hour. I shall not look into a mirror, light a candle, read a newspaper or write a letter. I have cut myself off from it all—all but an old book or so which I have found hidden away upon a shelf. I slept one night out under the fir trees on the hill slope above the house, but old Christine was so alarmed I feared that she would wire Frances or Göben, so I came to bed like a tame thing."

"And Göben—and your sister—left you thus—alone?" The idea was preposterous to him.

"Yes. They know how it is with me."

Altshofen changed the subject. "I have come up for the shooting disgusted, because a man who is my friend, and who was to have come with me, disappointed me quite at the last. Now"—he hesitated—"I, too, am alone. My *jagdhaus* is there." He pointed to a far-off hill top. "It is five miles away. My hunt lies upon the further side, touching that of Göben only where our farm lands meet."

Catherine looked back at the path they had trodden.

"I thought that I was alone in space—that I was happy because I was doing no harm. And—I was poaching."

She paused, and turning toward him, offered him her hand.

"I will go on with Eitel now, Herr von Altishofen."

"And you will go there—to the flax-field—again?" he asked as he took it.

"Yes. To see the flowers."

He half bent above her hand as if to offer the salute given in Germany to married women only; then, hesitatingly, he released it, with an awkward sense of having been stupid.

Yes, in that instant Catherine Hervy concluded that he had heard of her marriage, and she wondered wearily how much he knew of the story.

The uncertain gesture of the man recalled her finally from her mood of the height. The whole expression of her face altered. Her delicate brows straightened sternly, and, in spite of herself, her eyes questioned him before she turned away.

Altishofen took a case from the pocket of his shooting coat and stood for a moment while he lighted a cigarette; then he walked on slowly.

He was puzzled, haunted by something in his mind which would not reveal itself. Her name and her appearance stirred no memory. It was only when he said to himself: "She is the sister of the Gräfin von Göben," that he became aware of a certain knowledge which he possessed, but which refused to be recalled.

III

As Altishofen approached his own shooting lodge two hours later he saw a man playing with a dachshund before its door.

It was Wildnar, the friend who had disappointed him, a man who seemed alive to the tips of his handsome fingers, with that look of strength and delicacy common to the deer of the forest.

"Ach! You have come!" he cried to his guest, with a cordiality into which had crept a certain reluctance that surprised him.

"Yes. I'm here. Where's the Colonel? Isn't he coming?"

"I'm expecting him later."

He had been writing and wiring to this brother officer, urging upon him his hospitality. Now he was amused to

find that since the meeting of the morning he felt less anxious for his presence. Wildnar was quick to note the reserve shown in his welcome. But it was not until the twilight of that day that he understood it.

Late that afternoon, in a dim recess of the forest, a shot was fired and a roebuck fell in a path well trodden by the woodcutters. As chance would have it, Eitel was there, and he dropped to his knees embracing the creature as Wildnar came up.

The fool shrieked aloud.

"An end to this!" cried the hunter angrily. He blew upon a silver whistle which hung suspended at his neck.

"Bertram! Bertram!"

A gamekeeper came running down the path.

"Satisfy this howling fool and dispatch the buck!"

Bertram examined the animal. "It is dead, Herr Graf."

"Away with it then! Off with you!"

Bertram shouldered the animal. "Come, Eitel; Christine shall stop your mouth with pancakes."

"Who is the boy?" demanded Wildnar.

"It is Eitel, Herr Graf. It is the foolish son of Peter."

"Peter! That is the head keeper at the Göben preserves, is it not?"

"Yes, Herr Graf."

Eitel, still on his knees, was gazing at the sky. "He went that way, but I did not see him pass," he muttered.

"What mummerly is this?" asked the young man.

"The mad lady who is at the Göben *jagdhaus*—she amuses herself by talking strangely with the boy," explained the keeper, as he turned away with the dead animal.

"Tell me—Eitel—who is the mad lady at the *jagdhaus*?" Wildnar asked the boy.

Eitel regarded him cunningly, his face still covered with tears. "She is a fox spirit."

"Oh, ho! She fills your head with strange nonsense! It is no longer empty!" He laughed good-naturedly.

The crackling of twigs was heard. A

light foot trod the path, and soon a girl came into view, walking swiftly toward them. Eitel leaped to his feet and ran to her side.

"There is another red stain!" he cried. "See!" He pointed to the blood-spotted earth.

"The fox spirit herself!" murmured Wildnar, and then suddenly he recognized her. "Miss Hervy!" he exclaimed, uncovering his red head.

She would have passed him with merely a smile and bow had he not stood, as if unintentionally, in her path.

A piping cry was heard in the undergrowth near them. Eitel, hearing it, listened eagerly. His attention was immediately distracted from the dead roebuck.

"It is a bird! Perhaps it is hurt," he said to Catherine anxiously.

"Go, then—run!" She motioned him away.

The boy disappeared amid the low bushes at the side of the path, eagerly imitating the cry of the bird.

"And is it you, Miss Hervy, may I ask, who has taught the fellow such nonsense?" Wildnar laughed again, amused and interested. Like Altishofen, he spoke in English.

"Yes. I have told him tales. I find an interest in Eitel. He is like some innocent creature of the forest."

"I envy him. He is happier than I."

Yet the young man seemed very happy. As he looked at Catherine he wondered, as Altishofen had done that morning, why he had never fully realized her charm.

"Here is the gentlest woman in the world!" he said to himself with the extravagance characteristic of him. "Yet she is the heroine of a scandal!"

He was seeking in his mind for an excuse to walk on with her.

"You are far from the *jagdhaus*; may I—will you permit—"

"I know my way." Then Catherine smiled. "Really, I should not have said that, since it seems that I am trespassing again."

"Or I? Perhaps I have strayed? I am stopping for a few days with Altishofen. Am I on his ground?"

"I feel that you are. I seem to have fallen into the habit of straying into Herr von Altishofen's territory."

As she turned to go, he followed her obstinately, and they walked on a few paces side by side, talking casually of the woods and of the weather.

The man puzzled her for he had an air of arrogance which approached impudence, and his admiration was too frankly expressed in the bold glance of his handsome red-brown eyes. Yet at the same time she acknowledged to herself that he possessed a curious attraction.

As she looked at him she recalled the night she had last seen him, to which his host had alluded that morning. He had stood with the latter upon the terrace of the Stephanie at Baden, his hand upon his shoulder. Altishofen had been a magnificent figure in the blue and rose of his regiment, but there had seemed something sinister, threatening, about the other in the somber uniform of a Black Hussar.

As if reading her thoughts, he exclaimed: "Ah, it was at that ball at the Stephanie—at Baden—that we last met!"

"I remember," added Catherine. "I was with Göben and my sister."

"I know—I know," he murmured, with a curious look in his eyes of which he was unaware.

Wildnar paused. "I think I will leave you to go on without me. I should like another shot at a roebuck since it is not yet altogether dark. So—good-bye."

"Good-bye," said Catherine tranquilly.

She would have passed him with a smile and a few careless words, but he made it seem necessary that she should offer her hand, above which he bent very slightly, and she fancied that he did so with the same awkward hesitation shown by Altishofen. And again she experienced an odd certainty that this man also knew her story.

Wildnar stared after her. Her air was as he had always recalled it, with its strange discouragement to friendliness. Always he had longed for an opportunity to meet her with less ceremony. And

now she was here—at an adjoining shooting house.

The sister of the Gräfin! He recalled her story. He raised his eyebrows with a cynical thought. The heroine of a scandal—there—playing wood nymph, with an attendant faun.

And Altishofen! Did he know that he had such a neighbor? If so, he had said nothing of it.

Ah! That was why he had been less cordial than usual! He had met her here! He would like to monopolize her. Selfish brute! But where was Göben? And the Gräfin?

Was the girl alone at their shooting house?

IV

AFTER returning to Altishofen's lodge on the peak, Wildnar, seeing a light shining from the cellar window, went down to look at the roebuck he had shot. Bertram was at work removing its horns.

"The lady—the fool's friend—how long has she been here?" he asked of the keeper in a careless tone.

"I do not know, Herr Graf." Bertram added after a moment: "She is the sister of the Frau Gräfin Göben."

"She is stopping at their *jagdhaus*?"

"Yes, Herr Graf."

"The Graf and Gräfin are there?"

"No, Herr Graf. She is alone there. Christine cares for her. She is not well, it is said." The fellow's tone became mysterious. "She is mad, Herr Graf," he added.

"Oh! She is mad, is she? So!"

"It is the lady who made the *lager*."

"What *lager*?"

"The *lager* in the flax. The Herr Baron saw her in the field this morning."

"Altishofen is a sly fox," thought Wildnar.

The lady might, or might not, be mad. However, she was beautiful. He recalled her charm of form and carriage. In her haughty little face, her air of reserve, he had found nothing erratic that evening.

Altishofen was meeting her day by day?

But then—why had he asked him

there? The answer to this thought was simple. He had not known of the proximity of the lady at the time he had sent the telegram. When had he discovered it?

That morning?

Wildnar whistled softly to himself as he turned away. "Today?" he thought. "He met her this morning; I—this afternoon. I am too late."

He went upstairs to the hall, where the large lamp which hung from the ceiling was already lighted. Several letters were lying near some cartridge boxes upon a table.

Two were from Bad Nauheim, and addressed in the handwriting of Erda, Baroness von Altishofen. Wildnar carried them all to his friend, who had been cleaning a gun upon the balcony of the general living room, and who was leaning upon the wooden balustrade, staring out into the twilight, which had not yet obscured the distant outlines of the hills.

Taking the letters from Wildnar, he went to the door and read them by the lamplight of the room within.

"What does the Colonel say?" asked the hussar after the other man had read that which bore the postmark of a certain garrison town. "When is he coming?"

"Not for a week or so yet. I thought he'd be here tomorrow." He tore open the letters written by his wife, glanced at their contents, then thrust all into his pocket. He lighted a cigarette, after offering one to Wildnar.

"When do you leave here?" asked the latter, fingering his match before striking it.

"In a day or so."

"Come back with me—if he doesn't come."

"Perhaps I will," said his host carelessly.

The dragoon and hussar stood side by side, watching the approach of night. In a way they resembled each other, the one red and the other golden in coloring. They were two human items in that magnificent machine, the German army.

It was not until they were eating their dinner that night that Wildnar asked

with affected indifference: "Is Göben at his shoot?"

"No."

Altishofen considered. Should he speak of having met the sister that morning?

"Do you remember that night at the Stephanie"—the hussar continued—"at Baden, you know—when we both danced with his wife's sister?"

As he spoke he divided his attention between his plate and the face of the man he questioned.

"Yes."

Altishofen hesitated, and was about to confess that he had not known Miss Hervy's relationship to the Gräfin at that time. But his interrogator did not wait for the explanation.

"Do you also recall a conversation at Hanover last winter?"

"What conversation?" asked the other, with an immediate premonition, however, of what was coming.

"A conversation as to a scandal, told by Osten, then attached to our embassy in London; the lady—an Englishwoman." Wildnar was watching him closely.

"I do not see the connection."

"You had forgotten that the lady of that affair was the sister of Gräfin Göben?"

"I suppose I had. I seem to recall it now. I've never seen much of the Gräfin, so if I knew—well, I had forgotten. And," he added emphatically, "I did not know that Miss Hervy was her sister. I've never seen them together but once—that night of the ball."

Wildnar was surprised, perhaps incredulous. "They are sisters. And Miss Hervy is the heroine of Osten's story."

Altishofen understood then why, in meeting Catherine that morning, he had been haunted by a something illusive and the phrase, "a sister of the Gräfin von Göben," had seemed to possess a puzzling meaning; but he had still to explain to himself why he experienced a sense of shock. What was Miss Hervy to him?

There was a gleam of amusement in the hussar's eyes.

"It was an ugly story, as I recall it," the other said finally.

"It was."

"Karl von Raegener was the man connected with it?"

"Yes. Osten knew as much about it as anyone has been permitted to know."

"Repeat it to me!"

"You forget? Briefly then, it is this: Raegener was married to the sister of the Gräfin—an English girl, a Miss Hervy. She was very young at the time—just out of school." He hesitated. "His bride ran away from him the evening of their marriage. It is said that he was very drunk. You remember that fellow? He began each day with cognac and ended it in some low café. He was a hog. Well—they had gone to a hotel, and were to leave London early the next day.

"She ran away—that night—left him. She was like a little white hare a dog had scared. Was very ill for months. Was in some sanitarium, I believe. They say she has never fully recovered her memory. It seems she went to her sister that midnight. Göben followed Raegener. No one knows what happened. Settlements were cancelled and a divorce followed. It was rushed through with evidence taken privately. Miss Hervy resumed her maiden name. Göben was pretty ruffled, I'll bet. You see, Raegener got him on the blind side. I heard that he challenged the swine, and that, to a man, each fellow in his casino refused to act as his second."

"So he was drunk upon his wedding night!" Altishofen said slowly. He was recalling the words of the keeper that morning: "The mad lady." Was she then really mad? "I remember the story now," he added. "But I hadn't connected it with Miss Hervy. I don't recall that Osten gave her name."

Altishofen had resumed his air of indifference, and seemed to be giving his whole attention to a saddle of roebuck which he was carving.

"Yes. He did. But he spoke of her most frequently as the Gräfin's sister. Their mother had been dead for years. I have heard that the father died almost immediately after the scandal."

Altishofen was silent for a moment. This story had been that which he had so vainly endeavored to recall. "And this was long ago?"

"Five years."

The sister of the Gräfin von Göben! She was just across the valley at that moment, at a neighboring shooting house. She was no very young girl now, but a woman perhaps twenty-three years of age. And this girl had made a *lager* in his flaxfield! And he had talked with her that morning!

Wildnar watched Altishofen closely. He continued with the air of himself recalling, for some reason not given, a long past scandal: "You see, he had depended upon the Hervy *dot*. His furniture and stable had been pledged for a year before he met her. He owed some forty thousand marks on the day he sailed from Flushing for London. Well, the wedding bells rang all right, but his bride chucked him, and he was forced to bolt."

"And then?"

"He could not return to Germany. He went out to Cairo—went into some business—died out there."

"It is a terrible tale. As to the girl—one can understand. Very young—I think Osten said—probably very innocent—delicate—refined in her ideas of life—oh, yes—one can understand."

"If she was all that, one can understand. And if she wasn't all that—well, Raeger was impossible—one of the queer sort—rotten."

Altishofen asked himself: Should he tell Felix that, at that moment, the girl was just across the valley? He was never able to explain to himself why he remained silent in regard to so innocent a fact.

He had always felt a respect for the girl, a respect so sincere that he had not sought her society. He had not the habit of platonic, and one glance at her face had seemed to assure him that she took life too seriously to be in touch with his point of view of it. And it was difficult for him to readjust his ideas of her. Was she less innocent than he had fancied her to be?

He knew himself to be a creature apart

from the more normal of the human race. Strange instincts common to lower planes of creation had arisen in him occasionally to overflow saner levels. Secret things tormented his conscience at times, things which he knew would be absolutely incomprehensible to Felix.

He lighted a cigarette and glanced at Wildnar.

The other man was regarding him with concealed amusement. "He little dreams that I know she is near here," he was thinking, "or that he met the lady in his flaxfield this morning. He has spoken to her in English, and so lapses into that language while with me, at the mere recollection of her. There is something which he is concealing. Why?"

He said to himself that as Boris chose to be so reserved he also would remain silent as to his own meeting with Miss Hervy.

V

THE following noon Catherine rose and had her bath upon the balcony, in the sun. Then she ordered Christine to place her bed out there in order that she might sleep beneath the stars that night.

She leaned her elbows upon the rough balustrade of the balcony, and lay with her head upon them basking in the sunlight. As she rested there, her thoughts turned to memories of her girlhood. And again she asked of herself the question which had remained unanswered for five years:

What is the secret which haunts my consciousness, yet refuses wholly to reveal itself?

She knew that she had married a man whose very face she could not now recall. She had been told that facts had come to light which proved him to have been a scoundrel. She knew that a divorce had been granted. Her first conscious moments after a long illness had been troubled by certain questions of her brother-in-law and a lawyer who came to see her. And each morning she had forgotten the events of the preceding day. Months had passed like that. A year later they had taken her away from

England. And for four years she had not been home.

But the thing which remained was the strange cloud of horror which from time to time descended upon her brain, with its almost remembered sense of a past calamity. And Catherine Hervy felt that this lapse from sanity, as she believed it to be, set her apart from all that could otherwise have entered into the existence of a normal woman. In this then lay her grief—her fear that at such times she was insane.

She left the house in the late afternoon. Hearing the woodcutters at work upon the opposite side of the hill, she followed the sound.

She passed the group, and going a little higher up the hill, she sat by the wayside, near an old half-buried memorial stone. Away over upon the other side of the valley she saw a man carrying a gun, and wondered if it was Altishofen or Wildnar.

Rising, she walked on aimlessly, and with a growing sense of the approach of that dreaded mood which seemed always to crush her brain when it took possession of her.

"I am *feig*," she thought.

Turning, she plunged into the woods, weeping and sobbing, struggling with the heavy undergrowth.

At early twilight Altishofen, whom Catherine had seen as he crossed the farmlands upon the other side of the valley, followed a route through the forest, gun in hand and alert for roebuck. He worked his way in a circle around the valley, keeping always on the higher ground.

At length, as the darkness had deepened he gave up the hunt for the night. He thought that he might go first to the village before setting out for his longer tramp to his own house, as he wished to have some few things sent out to him in the morning. He decided that his shortest route would be through a beechwood which bounded the preserves of Göben, and soon found himself following a path which wound through the densest part of the place. As he walked leisurely along, his attention was attracted to a curious sound—that of a strange wail

which rose and fell like some freak of the wind.

He was distinctly conscious of an unpleasant sensation. He recalled the legends of these woods told at night by the peasants. Again he heard the cry.

It was the voice of a woman crying. And he knew that the woman was Catherine Hervy.

His first impulse was to steal away. Then a strange warmth flooded his heart and a mere instinct became resistless, and he went on.

At the sound of his feet in the undergrowth the lament of the voice ceased. As he went on the gloom deepened, yet when he came to a place where Catherine was there was enough light to see her eyes, and he was reminded by them, and the attitude of her crouching figure, of a wounded doe.

He lifted the weeping woman with consummate tenderness. She trembled violently and shrank from him as if in fear.

"Don't be afraid," he murmured. "Don't be afraid. Nothing can hurt you. Come, I will take you home."

Half leading, half supporting Catherine in his arms, he sought the path, gray in the dusk. Once upon it, he lifted her as if she had been a child, and carried her down the slope.

They came to an open place, overlooking the village, and not far from the path she had followed that day. He placed the girl upon the earth in such a way that her back was supported by a great rock.

"Shall we rest here?" he asked.

She leaned her head against the stone and closed her eyes. After some time she said: "I am sorry you found me."

"I don't believe that you are sorry," replied he slowly. "I should hate to believe it."

Aside from the barking of a dog far beneath them, the silence was complete. Yet, from some unknown depth within himself, a voice seemed calling to Altishofen. A something secret and sweet insisted upon a course not yet clear to him.

Catherine was motionless, but he felt that she was conscious of her unusual

situation—was considering it, and him. Suddenly she raised both hands to the sky, and a low cry escaped her lips, a cry so piercingly sad that it seemed that of an utterly hopeless being.

"I am mad—mad!" she cried.

"You are not mad," said Altishofen quietly.

He spoke evenly, soothingly. "See! There is no evil thing here tonight. We are alone on this mountain—you and I—with the harmless wild creatures of the forest."

"I am so humiliated," she murmured brokenly. "What must you think of me?"

"Think of you! I wish I could make you understand! You are suffering, and I am offering the small best part of me in the impulse which leads me to say that I am sorry for you. Sorry for you! I am burning with pity—for women who suffer all over the world—and of whom I become aware for the first time, in you."

He was conscious that she was weeping softly.

"What is it? Tell me!" he urged, yet feeling that he already knew, and that he was singularly stupid in asking the question.

"There is something—something," faltered Catherine, "which I try to recall—yet I fear the memory. I don't understand."

Altishofen appeared to be watching a torch which he saw carried by a man halfway down the side of the hill.

"One can understand very little," he replied lightly, as if not considering her words seriously.

After that both were silent for a long time.

They watched the man with a torch, now plainly visible not far beneath them. Altishofen shouted to him, and he came, stumbling, running. It was the keeper.

The *fräulein* had tired herself too much. He had been fortunate enough to find her. So Altishofen said.

The keeper turned to precede them, his torch lighting their path.

In front of the *jagdhaus* they found Christine awaiting them. Her imperturbable face showed no astonishment in learning that the Herr Baron was with

the mad lady. Things were as they were.

Catherine was awakened at an early hour of the following day by the sunlight which shone upon her where she lay in her bed upon the balcony. Little by little she recalled the events of the previous evening.

Was it true that Boris, Baron von Altishofen, the gay officer of the Stephanie, at Baden, had carried her down the mountain side in his arms? She again experienced the sensation of being placed in a situation as unreal as that of a dream.

"He will think me mad. He must. And I *was* mad. At such hours I am nothing less."

She thought that, in the event of his leaving the Odenwald that day, they might not meet again. She carefully considered how best to avoid him, until she found that she was being dishonest.

Yes. They must hereafter be friends.

VI

AFTER her breakfast, Catherine went to inquire after a sick child in the village.

The house, which she easily found, shocked her by its unaired condition. She was surprised to find that the child, who eyed her wanly, was already aged by approaching death.

The news contained in a letter from her sister, received that morning, in some way made the scene personal to her. This child was dying. Yet there had been a time when its poor mother had surely said to someone, as Frances had written: "I am to be a mother!"

She was saddened, but could do nothing, and left the house, in which relatives were already gathering, with an awkward feeling of having intruded.

She heard an air whistled by some passer-by, that of the Venetian love song from "The Tales of Hoffmann," and saw a man standing near the path. She recognized Wildnar, and for some reason she colored vividly.

He regarded her critically. Why had she blushed?

Upon the return of Boris after mid-

night—a Boris preoccupied and confessedly unsuccessful as to roebuck—he had immediately suspected that his friend had been with Catherine Hervy.

"You are astonished to find me lingering here," said he, smiling, "but I was in the village and saw you pass. I followed you."

He turned to walk slowly at her side.

"I thought that it might be Herr von Altishofen," she said naively.

He seemed amused. "But if you had known us better, you would have realized that Altishofen never whistles but that I do."

"And you—how do you amuse yourself here in these mountains? You are no real fox spirit, as your friend Eitel would have had me believe the other day. What do you do?"

"Oh, I roam about—as you know—and I read."

Her thoughts returned to the scene she had just left. Quitting personalities, she told him briefly of the dying child. Her beautiful lips trembled a little; her blue eyes grew moist.

"The little child said: 'I hear music.' How strange!"

"It has got to be a deathbed habit," said he, laughing. "Why think about it? What's the use? Life—what is it? A day or so ago the little kid was full of it! Now"—he snapped his fingers—"it is ended! That is all there is to it!"

"Is that your idea of it?"

"As for me," he said, "I expect to laugh a little, cry a little and then go to sleep."

Catherine looked at him, laughing. "You do not believe that you have a soul?"

"No."

"Perhaps you are right." She smiled sweetly, yet with some hint of malice.

"How absurdly we have talked!" said Catherine as they went on together. "What a ridiculous discussion for two people who are strangers!"

"How intimate must two people be before they can speak of souls without indecency?"

Catherine felt herself absurd in her effort to speak seriously with him. "Oh,

well! Why should we bother each other with our opinions?"

"You believe in a God, perhaps?" he asked bluntly.

But Catherine could not force herself to discuss her God. "Belief is healthy," she asserted after a brief silence. "Man must believe in something."

"I should like you to believe in me." The voice of Wildnar became low, sweet, eager.

She felt ill at ease and apprehensive. She looked at him rather sternly, but when she met his eyes she smiled.

A bit of dried grass was sticking to the rough tweed of his coat sleeve. Without thought, she reached to brush it away.

Wildnar saw the gesture, and felt a small sense of triumph at its unconscious familiarity. He was puzzled, and tempted. This girl was the heroine of a questionable bit of scandal. And was she not also possessed of a degree of craft?

The purity of her face did not convince him. Her eyes had a candor of gaze which was uncommonly like that of a child, but he had seen the same look of innocence in the face of many a German *cocotte*.

And was she not meeting Altishofen by stealth?

They were ascending the route which led to the house.

"Have you seen flax in bloom?" Wildnar grew daring. He was recalling the gossip of the keeper.

"They are not in bloom yet," she replied promptly. "There is only one field near here."

"I thought that there were a number," said he carelessly. "I know Altishofen has had a lot of trouble about his. It was much trampled. A doe made the mischief." He spoke with complete ease and apparent unconsciousness.

Evidently Altishofen had said nothing of her association with the trampled field. Then she would not say that she had seen him. She suddenly realized that her present companion must have preserved the same secrecy as to his meeting with her. Was it possible that both men believed her lonely walks an

outrage of propriety? If so, each had tried to protect her from the criticism of the other.

Wildnar's eyes still rested upon the face of the girl. His youth burned hot in his blood. He thought her a fraud. Why did she not mention her meetings with Altishofen? And where had they met the night before?

VII

ALTISHOFEN was still absorbed by his memories of the scene upon the mountain. And this preoccupation was seen by his friend, who immediately surmised that his thoughts were with Catherine Hervy.

The inferences such a man would draw must be understood. He had known many women who had not disdained to carry on affairs within the walls of their country houses, and who had found a piquancy in the fierce rivalry of men. And what he knew of Boris went far to lay him open to suspicion.

Some letters were brought into the room by Bertram, and he saw the indifference with which the other turned them over. There was a square envelope which he himself put into his pocket unopened.

Altishofen looked up from a letter which he was reading. "Another letter from the Colonel—he will come next week."

"That is good. And I?"

"Why—naturally you'll come?"

Wildnar was amused at the slight hesitation which accompanied the reply.

Their friendship dated from the days when both were in the war school together.

Wildnar was not as blond as Altishofen, his hair being quite red, and there was perhaps more fire in his blood as there were fewer dreams in his brain. Less sensual than the other, he was at the same time less spiritual, although in a way carelessly independent of moral laws, had not been tempted to any vulgar debauchery.

An orphan, his boyhood and education had been strictly ruled by powerful

guardians because of his high birth. He had had no social freedom preceding the year in which he left the gymnasium. An ardent and bold youth, he was then thrown into a coterie of which the Gräfin Arendt, a woman of thirty-five, was the charming and acknowledged leader. The boy was dazzled and flattered by her immediate gift of sympathetic understanding, and probably her charm and loveliness were, for him, unforgettable, as she had continued to hold his affection during a rapid succession of ephemeral fancies. Society had never assured itself that the association between them was not purely platonic, and their intimacy, while recognized, had been tolerated.

And now life had brought the young man to this lonely shooting house to play a role the capacity for which lay unsuspected in his nature.

Apropos of nothing, his host related a scandal in his own regiment, which had been brewing earlier in the month, a scandal which, Wildnar thought, might lead to a duel.

"No. The Colonel will settle it," Altishofen said in conclusion. "It will never go before the court of honor."

"They will not fight?"

"There have been but few duels for the last five years."

"Has there been a loss of force in the will to love—the will to resent—the will to defend personal rights? Are there no more lovers like Lassalle?"

Altishofen's lip curled contemptuously. "Bosh! A fine lover! A madman!"

"I understand his madness. Helene von Dömiges was well worth it!" Wildnar said. "When a passion like that comes—" He paused.

The other made no comment upon the words. His eyes, which had been staring straight at the face of the younger man, were suddenly veiled by the droop of their heavy lids. It was as if he retired within himself. A door closed between him and his friend.

At last Altishofen spoke. "Passion! I think men call that thing passion which is quite another thing—which is merely sensuality."

"I don't bother myself much about such ideas," Wildnar continued. "I tell you, Boris, to eat, sleep, work, play, laugh and love, without thought or analysis, is best!"

"You are a pagan!"

"I know it!"

"Yet—you are a better man than I. You are a healthy, happy animal—sound, sane."

Altishofen was silent for a moment. Deep in his heart was a sense of guilt. There was a taint upon his mind not upon that of the other man. Finally he said:

"I—I—am capable of understanding things—heights—that I could not hold."

Suddenly both became conscious that they were again speaking in English.

"Why are we speaking English?" Altishofen colored sensitively.

Wildnar lifted his glass of rich golden beer. He laughed sheepishly.

Then in German he said: "Well, as for me—I may be a brute, but I fancy I'm merely human. The bouquet of Burgundy—even beer like this—the shock of firearms—the chase—cards—the smiles of women—they content me. Yet I'm no leper—nor are you."

"Does one man ever really know another?" Altishofen examined the edge of his knife carefully. He regarded his friend with admiration.

"You red devil," he said, "even your eyes are like fire!"

"Speaking of eyes, what eyes Miss Hervy has!" said Wildnar, and watched Altishofen closely. "Do you—remember her eyes?" He thought he would force a confidence.

"Yes."

Then, with an affected carelessness, Wildnar asked: "You have not seen the lady since that night in Baden?"

"No."

The hussar was stunned. Boris lied like that! Such a lie associated with so truthful a man could mean but one thing—the protection of a woman's fair fame. And innocent women need no such protection.

"I have been a little *épris* there for a year," he said after a pause, regarding his rival with a strange expression.

The dragoon sat in silence. His face had suddenly resumed its expression of reserve; his eyes were fixed upon Wildnar, and their glance was very cold.

"There is certainly some affair here!" Wildnar repeated to himself. "How far has it gone?"

At midnight the two young officers left the Odenwald, Altishofen going to his regiment, where he remained a week. Then, after having secured another leave, and a renewed promise from his Colonel to come to him for some shooting, he returned to the lodge on the peak for Saturday and Sunday.

VIII

CATHERINE was a little shy with her own knowledge of her new friendship, and she read much in order to distract her thoughts from the scene upon the mountain, which began to seem unreal to her. For a few days she went little to field or forest, lingering upon her balcony.

She also read the letters from Frances which had been accumulating, and among them was one written in answer to a description of her meeting with Altishofen and Wildnar, given by the girl with meager detail, yet of sufficient interest to Gräfin Göben to warrant the offering of various information as to both men. Altishofen was "nice."

As to his friend, the hussar, there was this sentence in the letter Frances had written:

The Graf Wildnar of whom you write is said to be very fascinating, and has been the lover—they say—of the Gräfin Arendt for nine years, or ever since he was eighteen years old. Fancy!

The Gräfin Arendt she had never seen, but her portrait had been among those of other fashionable women in a show in Paris the year before, and had strangely attracted the girl. She tried to recall the face, but could only remember that it was that of a *grande dame*—both sweet and haughty. At the same time it was that of a woman who was certainly no longer young.

In a strange way the gossip of Frances's letter seemed to give her more entirely to the new friendship with Altishofen.

Catherine put Wildnar very gently out of her mind, blushing faintly to think that the lover of another woman should have been thought about by her at all in just the way she had thought of him.

Catherine met Altishofen near the *jagdhaus*. He had returned to the Odenwald the night before. Neither tried to disguise the pleasure in the meeting.

"Your field—your flaxfield is in bud," he said in an embarrassed tone. "Will you come and see it?"

"Are the buds blue yet?"

Seeing him ill at ease, she was immediately self-possessed. She had dreaded meeting this man who had carried her in his arms, and who knew too much of her.

"No. Not blue yet. Shall we go there?"

"Gladly."

They went together down into the valley and entered the forest.

"What was the name your sister called you, Miss Hervy—that night at Baden?" he asked her.

"Aumerle."

"An odd name. It sounds like the name of a bird—or a jewel. Who gave it to you?"

"My father. I am named Catherine Aumerle Hervy."

"Catherine Aumerle Hervy"—he repeated it with great care in the pronunciation of the words. "I like it."

She laughed. "And what is your name?"

"My name is Boris. My grandmother was a Russian. She gave me her father's name. My mother died when I was born and my grandmother took me to her home—after my father's death."

"Is your grandmother living?"

"No. I have no one—except Erda." He felt this to be a stupid remark.

"Your wife?"

"Yes."

She asked him if he were alone at the *jagdhaus*, or if Graf Wildnar had returned also.

So she had known of Felix's visit! She had seen him! They had met! And his friend had preserved the same secrecy observed by himself! Why? He answered her with a monosyllable, then both were silent for a bit.

"When did you first see Wildnar?" he asked with assumed carelessness.

"The afternoon after I met you in the flaxfield—that first day."

So! At the time Wildnar had questioned him that night at dinner—at the very hour he had revived his memory of the scandal connected with her unfortunate marriage—he had known of her presence at the neighboring shooting house!

They arrived at the field upon the height.

The waving stalks of the flax were tipped by tiny buds like green wax. But there was still no blue—only green—to be seen in all the field.

"I never saw anything so fairylike! And they have all formed—those millions of tiny green molds—since I was here the other day! Can the blue be prettier?"

"Wait and see!" said the young man, stooping to pluck a handful of the tender buds.

He watched her thoughtfully as she gazed over the field. He could see that this was a woman with whom affection was a passion, and who knew no other. He felt himself to be a moral leper, yet he told himself that he would die rather than injure her.

He knew quite well what Felix was thinking. Felix was a fool.

IX

A WEEK later Altishofen left his regiment again, this time with a longer leave. It was the last week in May, and the air was filled with song and perfume.

"There is something I want to ask you," said he one afternoon when he and Catherine met in the village. "Have you ever been with Göben at dawn or twilight when he shoots—to see the roebuck come back from the field?"

"No."

"Come with me then, will you—at two in the morning—tomorrow?"

"I will." She thought how shocked Frances would be when she told her of this escapade. Well, she would not have entertained such a plan had it been suggested by any other man.

Her ready assent was startling. Altishofen was pleased by it. With an uncomfortable feeling, he realized that the girl was attributing to him all of the more noble virtues.

That evening Eitel, who had finished a cage of osiers, arranged within it a nest for the bird whose broken wing Catherine had bound skillfully to its side. Taking the cage in his arms, he went up the stone steps of the *jagdhaus* and held its door open while she placed the injured bird within it. They hung the cage high up at the side of the door, and arranged a cover for it of lilac branches.

Catherine told Christine to call her early—she was going to see the roebuck come back to the forest from the fields at dawn; she was going with the Herr Baron von Altishofen to his *hochsitz*.

Christine regarded her stolidly.

At two Christine awakened her by knocking at the door of the balcony. It was quite dark, the moon had set, and for a moment she was confused in thought, and lay staring at the few stars which were still brilliant, not realizing that it was morning.

Suddenly facts took shape, and she knew that Altishofen was awaiting her in the path before the house.

Springing up, she soon dressed herself in the rough clothes she had worn the day he had found her in the flaxfield, and went down the little narrow outside stairway with its rope at the side.

She pulled Altishofen into the little kitchen, where Christine had lighted an oil lamp and was pouring some hot cocoa into large earthenware cups.

Catherine herself cut the slices of rye bread and cold meat.

"Drink the cocoa and fetch the bread and meat in your pocket. Is that coat heavy enough? It is chilly."

They drank the steaming cocoa, looking over the tops of their cups at each other shyly, yet with pleasure, like two children who have just met. Christine managed to force the bread and meat, which she had rolled in a napkin, into a pocket of Catherine's coat, leaving it to Altishofen to explain that there must be no crackle of a paper wrapping to excite the suspicion of the deer.

So they went, running down the road through the fog, he, known by Wildnar to be a rake and egotist; she, whose extraordinary history, if innocently acquired, had set her apart from other girls. These two, alone in the forest at that strange hour of a new day, forgot that they had a past and would know a future, and were occupied only with the fact that the present hour was sweet.

When they came to the softer earth of a field he stopped.

With his lips close to her ear, he told her that, from there on, there must be no words spoken between them. They proceeded slowly, planting their feet in the wet earth carefully, cautiously avoiding all noise.

In the distance they heard the hoarse barking of a watchdog, and from a copse the disturbed twittering of the first *kuck-kuck* of the dawn.

The binders upon Catherine's legs were drenched to the knees. Blind, in the fog, she followed the slight sucking sound of Altishofen's rubber soles. Field after field they traversed in this way, meeting only two pretty yearlings straying from some shelter and startled by their passing. In skirting the borders of a stretch of seemingly impenetrable timber, they came to a place where he paused. Both listened. Not a sound was heard but the dripping of the wet from the branches of the trees.

Taking her hand, Altishofen placed it upon the round of a rough ladder. She grasped the uprights of wood and ascended some twenty feet, followed by him. At the top she found herself in a rude boxlike shelter, and he showed her where to sit, while he seated himself opposite her; and there, without a word being spoken, they emptied their pockets, eating their sandwiches with the ravenous hunger which comes after such an early walk in the woods.

Later, the light, although still dim, permitted Catherine to see that they were seated in either end of a small wooden structure, at about the height of the lower limbs of the trees. Before them stretched a shifting sea of mist in which no object could be distinguished.

Altishofen, with the familiar air of a good brother, buttoned still more closely the collar of her coat, as there was a chill in the air, from which they were only partially protected by the canvas lining of the box. Peeping out, she saw that the branches of pines nailed upon it disguised its exterior. He pressed a field-glass into her hands, and she saw that he was arranging another for himself, so she tried to follow his example, changing the lens slowly to suit her eyes.

Then consciousness seemed to focus in vision. Not a twig rustled. All was still, and it was as if the two were alone in space.

Suddenly she saw that he leaned forward with a keener intentness, and she strained her eyes to see that which she fancied was already visible to him.

Two shadows approached, separated, fled.

A swirl of mist rose and fell. Wreath-like it circled about, and in its midst she saw a proud little head, raised, alert, suspicious, a doe whose fawn followed, daintily stepping, fearless, at the side of its mother.

It seemed to Catherine that the doe cast a shadow. Then there were other shadows, fitting, coming one by one, three, four, then six she counted, all like phantoms approaching the box where she sat with Altishofen. These creatures of the forest were returning to its shelter after their feast of the night in the damp and richly foddered fields, where there remained the countless dainty prints in the soft mould.

It was like a dream, because so soundless.

Suddenly, in an opening between some groups of amber-colored shrubs, Catherine saw a stag, a red deer.

The animal stood haughtily at ease, motionless, regarding the scene before him. Fragility and force united in his superb proportions. Behind him the tops of sky piercing pines were already silvered by the sunrise. The light rested upon his delicate outlines and shone vividly along each branch of the antlers which crowned his proud and stately head. Catherine, knowing that the creature was safe, as deer are not shot

at that season, regarded him with delight.

A pale drift of fog gradually concealed him. When it lifted, the place where he had stood was empty.

The wisp of mist lay low then along the ground as if borne to earth by the weight of the day's growing brilliance. And, as if stranded upon a tiny island of turf, just beneath the *hochsitz*, a roebuck paused, his head up, sniffing the air as if in suspicion.

She felt rather than saw that Altishofen had raised his rifle. Her heart leaped and she set her teeth in her lower lip. Breathlessly she awaited the second when he should pull the trigger.

But the gun wavered a little, then was lowered, and finally laid to rest at his feet.

For at that moment he remembered how Catherine had begged for the life of the fox on the day he had found her in his flaxfield. He turned to her, moved with tenderness, unaccountably proud of himself because of his ability to feel such an emotion. Knowing that only a sportsman could appreciate such a sacrifice on his part, he offered it to Catherine, elate with his new unselfishness.

"You do not want me to shoot?" he asked, in the tone he would have used with a child.

At the first sound of his voice the plain beneath them emptied itself, the wild creatures, alert, frightened, fleeing with sharp guttural barking sounds, and with much bobbing of black rumps as they bounded away.

Catherine was inexpressibly relieved, yet a little ashamed for having spoiled the hour for him, as she thought.

"There, there! They are safe—see! They have gone! But you saw them. And we came for that." He spoke good-naturedly, amused by his new role.

Altishofen was glad that he had not shocked her by the death of a creature he felt she had longed to save. He found her ideas upon such subjects a bit morbid; but he thought that he had done right in respecting them. She was like a child. A conviction entered his mind which never left it. This girl

was all that he had believed her to be before hearing the gossip repeated to him by Felix. Her sense of security while with him was due to her innocence. She was pure, cold, yet sweet. Her sweetness was more characteristic of her than her beauty. He saw that to the end she would be like that. Age would not rob her of that perfume of character.

They saw no more deer or roebuck.

On their homeward way they entered a dell. A hare crossed their path, and from some bushes a bird suddenly burst into song. The whole place was filled with low shrubs, and Altishofen found a mossy place where they could sit and talk. He told her of the great autumn shoots in October, of the parties of men who filled his *jagdhaus*.

She looked at him strangely. "Where do they go when they die—these poor little creatures you kill for pastime?"

"I don't know. Do you?" He laughed.

"And you have never thought of it?"

"Never," said Altishofen, leaning back lazily and clasping one knee with his hands; "perhaps they go higher." He thought all such fancies due to a weakness in her character. But he forgave it, because of the affection he felt for her.

He glanced wonderingly at her. A delicate flush stained the tan of her cheek. Her lips quivered with pity for the poor wild creatures of the forest about them. It was an attitude of mind totally incomprehensible to him. Yet for the first time in his life he was drawn to a woman, not by the music of sexual allurements, but by what seemed to him to be a human soul. Catherine Hervy appealed to him by the complete absence of passion in her, by her cold serenity. His jaded nature rested in her presence happy in being unaroused. While with her, Altishofen found himself freed from his demon. He wondered if that freedom would continue. If so, there could be no harm in such a friendship as theirs. He, who had never believed in platonic, found peace in their strange relation. And he saw that the girl regarded him as a

refuge. He wondered if, had there been no Erda, they could not have found happiness in marriage.

But even while he thought most tenderly of her, he was afraid of what he knew himself to be.

For a long while they sat quite motionless. They watched, without words, to see the dawn glow into gold and amethyst and pale pink.

Turning, with a sigh, he met her eyes with that extremely direct and frank gaze peculiar alike to the honest man and the blackguard.

"It's very strange—isn't it?"

Her eyes questioned him.

"You and I—here—together like this; all that has come to us."

He did not add that he was also thinking of all that was to follow. Ah, well, the hour was enough.

"Shall we go?"

After leaving the dell they said little, and Altishofen made Catherine run along the path as they approached the *jagdhaus*, seizing her hand and drawing her after him. Fleet, light of heart and foot, they raced and stumbled on. Like children they became heedless, gay.

But every step of his flying feet was carrying Altishofen toward a future he was trying to ignore.

X

A SHORT time later Wildnar was again with his friend in the mountains.

He did not fail to note, in the cordiality of Altishofen's greeting, a shade of embarrassment. From this he concluded that Catherine Hervy had not yet left. From the feeling of relief which followed the conclusion he realized that he had feared she might have done so.

"Well—I've come back," he said with an affectation of ease.

"Good!"

"I couldn't get away Saturday. And the Colonel? Has he come and gone?"

"Not yet. He wired last night. He's coming next week, he says. But he can't get away at the moment."

Wildnar was amused. He began to think that all this talk about a visit from the Colonel was a blind.

It is certain that the scandal which had so impressed Wildnar had not yet ceased to affect his thought of Catherine. His knowledge of Altishofen prevented his attributing his interest in her to any higher motive than that which, at the time, he believed to obsess himself.

It was not the first time that he had found himself a rival of Altishofen on the pursuit of some light woman. He could not surmise that his friend was fighting against temptation for the first time in his life.

The girl was meeting Boris secretly. His mind always returned to that. He argued that, if so light and easily acquired, she was fair game.

The point which puzzled him most was that which concerned Göben. Why had he permitted the sister of his wife to remain unchaperoned at such a lonely place as the *jagdhaus*? Did this indicate indifference? Did Göben know the girl to be all that he himself believed her?

"What do you hear from Erda?" He offered a freshly opened box of cigars to his host, as they sat over their coffee.

"Oh, the cure is progressing. Thanks, no; I prefer my cigarette."

"Is she coming here?"

"You know very well she never comes here."

"And the Colonel—is he really coming?"

"As I have already told you—yes."

The two men stared at each other, the one amused if more or less jealous, and the other embarrassed and defiant.

"Do you believe in a devil?" Wildnar suddenly asked. "Not *the* Devil—vague, incomprehensible—but a devil—a nasty, sniggering sort of chap who has a particular man assigned to him—with a vocation to ruin him. One has got hold of me."

"I think evil is a sort of vacuum," said Altishofen as if to himself—"not positive—just an emptiness—where God is not."

"Did you say something about—er—

a God?" Suspicious at once, Wildnar recalled immediately that Catherine Hervy had spoken of a God.

He had believed such talk but one of her pretty hypocritical poses. That Boris should affect the same thoughts he found amazing.

"Are these two people evolving a new theology between them?" he asked himself. "If so, the game is in the bag, and I *am* too late! How well do they know each other?"

Then suddenly losing his discretion, Wildnar bawled out: "I know you! You never thought that out! *She* did!"

Altishofen laughed in a shamefaced way. Then with an air of ease, badly carried off, he asked: "Why the deuce didn't you say you were meeting Miss Hervy—about—in the forest?"

"Perhaps for your own reason in not mentioning *your* meetings with her! Why didn't *you* say anything?"

The dragoon shrugged his shoulders and laughed sheepishly. "I don't know."

Yet at the same moment he felt a strong inclination to confess his trouble to Felix. But he said nothing. He found it too hard to begin. He recalled the fact that he had lied about the matter, and knew that Felix must also have that in mind. He hesitated. "What is Göben thinking of—to allow it? He—of all men!"

"Göben left her in the Odenwald because he knew he could do so safely. And who is there here to molest her? They're all honest folk here, simple and harmless. There is no one else here!"

"Except you," said the other man drily.

"And you," responded the latter. "Well—we are not dangerous."

"I am," admitted Wildnar; "and you used to be."

"I have felt no temptation to destroy her."

"Well, she has destroyed me. I cannot sleep at night," grumbled the hussar, rising and stretching himself.

"Come back with me, Boris, if I go on Monday. I know you have asked for further leave and received it, but come with me."

"Not yet."

"Why linger on here? Two fools! We're both attracted! Admit it! We are fools, Boris. You and I are fools about women. You are stopping on in the hope of seeing Miss Hervy again. And so am I. She is the most beautiful creature I ever saw in my life—yes, beautiful; but she is not for me! And she is not for you—a married man! For she's a good girl—isn't she?"

"I shall not see much more of her."

Nevertheless, each day at some hour Catherine continued to see one or the other of the two men. Wildnar went directly to the *jagdhaus*, with the air of seeking Catherine openly, always gay, charming and amusing, always showing boldly his growing infatuation. Altshofen, on the contrary, she met usually through accident or what appeared to be such. And each hour she felt a growing sense of security while with him, and a decrease in her dread of the black moods which had once filled her life with terror.

But the girl felt another danger threaten her. For the thrill which came with the presence of the young hussar disconcerted her. He was the acknowledged lover of another woman, a woman to whom "he always returned."

Why then did he regard her so strangely?

And at breakfast, lunch and late dinner, when the two men met, neither mentioned the name of Catherine Hervy again.

XI

THE wounded bird which Eitel had been nursing was well again, and Catherine and he decided to set it free. So, early in the morning they entered the forest and sought a suitable place. Eitel wished to seek a spot frequented by its fellows before opening the door of the cage. They passed on, through an aisle made by the sighing black pines to a spot where the trees had been cleared away.

Kneeling, Eitel opened the cage, and was surprised to find that the bird would not at first accept its liberty. But after a moment it was out and away.

Suddenly, Eitel, after listening in-

tently a while, said: "One of the hunters is coming!"

"It is perhaps a woodcutter."

"No. No woodcutter walks so."

Catherine was unable to hear the footsteps as Eitel did, but she soon heard a distant whistle, clear, sweet. Someone was whistling the familiar air from "The Tales of Hoffmann," so she was not astonished to see Wildnar when he came to them.

"You!" she exclaimed rather rudely.

"I have followed. It was very easy to do so, as I caught sight of you from time to time in openings between the trees."

"You went to the house?"

"I did, but didn't ask for you, as I saw you far in advance ascending the hill."

He gazed at her, pleased at her rising color.

"Why did you blush when you saw me?" he asked. "Why do you always blush for me?"

He was laughing, but there was a strange intentness in his gaze. Could an impure woman, he asked himself, blush like that?

No—suddenly she seemed to him the most virginal creature he had ever seen. How could he have been so led astray by a foolish scandal?

"I cannot make you out," he went on, as if half to himself. "I do not understand you. I admit it."

"Why should you try to do so?"

"That is as much as to ask: 'What am I to you?' And you are a great deal to me."

Again he wondered if Boris were also held at such a distance. "Am I fooled?" he thought.

"We cannot understand each other," said she. "I can only feel."

"Intuitions! I do not believe in them. I distrust them." He eyed her keenly, and then, as if he had read her mind, he added: "Distrust those you are entertaining at this moment!"

Catherine flushed. She was thinking of his infidelity—which she recognized—to that other woman. "One does not like to feel oneself mentally dissected," said she.

"Do you deny that at this moment you distrust me? Are not those feminine intuitions of yours already condemning me? And what have I done? Nothing! What have I said? Only those imprudences which nature and solitude cause to seem natural and human!"

"Boris—" she began, and then, hesitating, she again blushed violently in place of finishing her sentence.

Wildnar stared at her, stupefied. So! They were then really upon very familiar terms!

He repeated the name after her meaningly: "Boris!"

His eyes flamed with an ugly light. He tried to look deep in hers, to deduce from her confusion the truth.

Provoked at herself, at a loss for further speech, Catherine permitted the man to think as he liked. From that moment jealousy of a very simple animal sort took fire, and never afterward left Wildnar, who, even in his anger, coveted her fiercely.

He wondered if she was perhaps ignorant of Boris's marriage. No; she must know of it. Then there was but one thing to think. So he argued to himself, and was sick with rage.

"I am the intruder," he said with a sneer. "That is easy to be seen. Had I met you first! Ah!" He was ashen in color, furious, and tears burned his eyes.

Catherine flashed upon him such a look of consternation and anguish that he was staggered. But, upon telling himself that her air of horror was but surprised guilt, he lost his head completely.

"Wait!" he cried. "You shall hear me! You have turned my blood to fire. Every inch of my body cries out for you! What are you, to bring me to this in these few weeks!"

It was passion he felt—there was nothing of spirit about it; and the woman felt outraged and insulted.

"How dare you?" she cried, white and trembling. "How dare you?"

"I dare anything!" persisted Wildnar, on fire and reckless. "You don't know me, or you would fear me!"

"What—what—do you mean?"

"I mean—I mean that I am jealous—jealous of Boris!" His tone changed. "Yet, in spite of words for which there is no excuse—for which I am sorry—I love you—love you! Oh, have you nothing to say to me?"

His passion became in that moment his master. The music of his voice was that of the deepest emotion known to him. The demon of jealousy alone prevented Wildnar at that moment from saying more, from pouring out his anguish and doubt, and the passion, which if fully expressed, she would have realized offered no dishonor. For although he had not as yet actually contemplated the idea of marriage, that would have come with the liberty to speak at all. This she did not permit.

"No. I've nothing to say!"

But the girl trembled so that she could hardly stand. An exquisite unreasoning joy mingled with her anger. For a moment she was so moved that she ceased to criticise. Then it occurred to her that each word Felix von Wildnar spoke was an insult—now that, having gone so far, he said no more. She could not fathom the way by which he had traveled to that hour, for in her eyes he was not free. It was inexplicable, unforgivable. How dare he think of her as he was thinking?

"You don't know what you are doing!" It was a savage cry from the very heart of the man. "Do you want us to fight over you—like two stags of the forest?"

The realization of what it would really mean to these men if they quarreled suddenly assailed her. They were Germans. They were officers. If Altshofen were to learn that Wildnar had so insulted her—the two would fight. She had then a secret, which gave her a sense of guilt, and must be hidden from her friend. She could never tell him.

Suddenly Wildnar left her to go on alone, while he returned to the woods.

She watched him go, breaking the twigs upon the bushes with his fingers as he crashed through them, and turning his head from side to side in a mad-dened way, as if quite beside himself.

Frightened, she called to him, but he did not stop.

XII

THAT afternoon, after having discovered that Altishofen had secured still longer leave of absence, Wildnar again departed, this time raging with jealousy.

Because of his youthful and sincere adoration of Gräfin Arendt, the full force of his warm nature had not, until his meeting with Catherine Hervy, been concentrated upon any of his loves. She had always held that part of him which was highest and best, and he had always gone back to her, a woman so clever as not to need to be young. He had not hesitated to tell her quite frankly of the waxing and waning of each affair of his too fickle heart, and he had not thought it necessary to conceal from her the effect which had been produced upon his fancy by the Englishwoman. Her first allusions to his news had shown the sympathy and amused attention always given by her to such letters from him. But she had ended a later letter by writing: "Thou hast not truly loved the others, Felix, but I feel that thy heart, too good for such folly as has filled it, may open to this cold lady. As for me, I welcome her, but have lived too long within it to take my leave because of her."

Over and over again he considered the events of the past weeks.

He had, at first, believed Altishofen engaged in the old siege, that of a woman's arms. He had known that he regarded virtue in a married woman as bourgeois, and that the one in question had been the heroine of a scandal; and he had thought that she was amusing herself by meeting his friend secretly.

These conclusions had been dismissed gradually under the spell of Catherine's presence. Her manner when with him had made him believe himself mistaken, for he had been quick to realize the reason of her heightened color and sighs. He had seen that she felt his magnetism, and he had understood it better than she had. Yet for some strange reason the girl had appeared to fight against

emotions the birth of which was only too evident.

Was there something between herself and Altishofen which she feared to tell him? Had some right of a first opportunity given him a hold upon her? And in his haughty resentment of his own bold praise of her, Altishofen had had the air of protecting a sister. Could it be that a pure love had been awakened in him by this English girl?

Then what about Erda? The possession of a wife blocked all paths to an honorable relation between them.

As for himself, he felt that he had lost her.

Strangely enough, he had not as yet realized that the existence of the Gräfin Arendt and her part in his past might be known and regarded by Catherine as an obstacle to love.

As for Altishofen, his trouble was of a more complicated nature than that of Wildnar.

His passions were unawakened, but a strange new mystery of affection such as he had never felt for a woman made him uncertain of his course. When he had found Catherine in the woods weeping, alone, he had become in an hour her pure knight. He saw that she felt no necessity of defense because of her utter trust in the nobility of his character, a matter which her faith had gone far to construct. He had no very lively belief in it himself.

But he had now an amazing need for purification. There was that about himself which he loathed and which he yearned to discard. He felt that the woman could help him in this business of rehabilitation. He longed to make Catherine Hervy a part of his life, but it was a difficult problem. He was married to Erda. He, wiser than Wildnar, felt that Catherine would never dream of the liaison of which the latter believed her capable. Yet he mistook her feeling for himself, and believed it to be a more tender one than that of mere friendship.

He was happier after Wildnar left. He had felt himself tried and condemned before the judgment of his friend, and knew that no attempt at explanation

was possible. Occupied with his own vacillations, he had not realized the sudden madness of passion which had taken possession of Felix, nor had he recognized his jealousy.

Time had carried them well into June. At sunrise and sunset Catherine and Altishofen were together amid those scenes which were for him an intoxication. Summer was on the land and in their veins, but he did not know that the girl's pulses were beating with the impulse of love provoked by another man.

When with Boris she felt a freedom from that dread which lurked within her mind, and an ever growing sense of her security. So it was that she turned with abandon to a friendship she found no difficulty in telling herself was purely platonic.

One late afternoon they went to see the flaxfield. The buds were tinged with blue.

"If we watch, shall we see the flowers open?" she asked in a hushed voice.

"Oh, no. Not for a week, at least."

"It is like waiting for a miracle."

"Let us sit here at the edge. Then we can look off over the valley. The sun will soon set and we shall see the afterglow."

His eyes were fixed upon the scene before him but he saw nothing of it.

Catherine seated herself upon a grassy slope with the flaxfield at her back. The ground was cut steeply away from the path by which they had ascended, and the face of the declivity was nearly perpendicular. The view across the greater valley was veiled with the smoke of some burning brush in the fields far below them. Altishofen sat beside her.

Suddenly longing to confide in him, she could not do so. For Wildnar's words rang in her ears—a frightful menace: "Do you want us to fight over you like two stags in the forest?"

After the last scene between them, she felt that he would not reappear. No, she would say nothing to Altishofen. She thought she must be somehow at fault.

Sitting there shoulder to shoulder, these two were in reality very far apart, separated by mysterious inner distances.

There was a thing which tormented Altishofen only a little less than his knowledge of himself, and that was his ignorance of how much she remembered of Raegener.

"Tell me," he said—"I—I have waited for you to tell me—about—your marriage."

"I only know what they have told me," she said simply. "I suppose there was—something—which I have never been able to remember; they told me that he—he—had been very drunk; I—I—"

"Later, your sister did not tell you what you had said while ill?" His fierce curiosity mastered all pity for the girl.

"No. And I could never bring myself to ask," she said simply. "After the fever I had forgotten what it was. I knew of a horror—that was like madness. But what it was—I could not recall. It was like madness. It is madness." Catherine shivered as if chilled.

"You saw!"

"That night in the woods?"

"Yes. It is like that. It comes—it seizes me—I suffer. It is an insane horror. While it lasts—I am mad, I think."

"That night in the woods—you were crying for help against the horror which comes? That was it?"

"Yes."

Altishofen felt an inexpressible sense of pity and relief.

"He is dead," murmured the girl. "Just what it was—I don't know—I cannot remember—it has gone—I cannot tell you—" Her voice broke into a sob.

"But you are so young," he murmured. "You will marry again?"

"No," she said. "I shall never marry." She was unpleasantly surprised by the questioning.

And the man, suffering from *well-schmerz*, said, as if against his will, but very wistfully: "I am unworthy of your friendship. But if any woman could drive evil out of me—you could."

Suddenly she felt that some unexplained pain in his own life had made him seem brutal. She longed to comfort him, as he had comforted her, and leaned to him, sympathy in her eyes.

She wondered if his trouble concerned his wife. "Does *she* love you?" she asked, in a low, thrilling voice—and Altishofen knew that she spoke of Erda.

He answered Catherine at length very quietly and honestly: "She has never loved me, nor I her." Then he told her in brief the history of his unhappy marriage.

"If I were to try and free myself—" He hesitated, then continued in a curious tone of apology she failed to understand: "I could not do that. Do you think I should not have seen you so often—nor have told you all this?"

The girl said in a startled way: "Why should you not tell me? We are friends—and we have both suffered."

"What are we going to do?" he insisted in his weary voice.

"Love is not all," she said gently. "There is friendship—such as ours."

"Catherine"—he called her so—"if I fail you—if you find I am not what you think—shall I lose you?"

"You will not fail me! What have we to fear?" As she spoke she rose to her feet.

"I don't know," muttered the man, as he followed her.

"Are you afraid?" she asked in wonder.

"Afraid of myself." He whispered the words.

XIII

THE day of his return to the Odenwald Altishofen went to the village.

From there he sent a friendly note to Catherine asking her to meet him at their flaxfield at noon the next day. He had already satisfied himself during the early morning that the fullness of its bloom was upon the field. In a buttonhole of his shooting jacket he had thrust half a dozen of the blue *flachsblüten*.

He was still refusing to face realities, and, absorbed in his dream of impossible things, he stood for a moment on the sidewalk. Then he crossed the street toward the inn just as Wildnar came down the stone steps. It was with a sense of shock and an immediate

realization of something unpleasant in the situation that he recognized him.

Altishofen had leased his shoot at a time when he had been in a South German regiment. When he had got his change to another he had retained the place, although it then necessitated too long a trip for convenience, and, in the case of Wildnar, the express brought him only as far as a station where he was obliged to take a slower train, which crawled in and out of the hills. This had never prevented his acceptance of Altishofen's invitations, but now he had taken this tedious trip upon his own initiative, only to stop at an uncomfortable inn.

He had not then come for the hunting, as, unless at the *jagdhaus*, that was unlawful. This meant that there was in existence another reason of importance.

What was it? Certainly, a woman. But who? Catherine? That was ridiculous. And it could hardly be the Gräfin Arendt!

The young hussar made no comment upon seeing Altishofen.

"You!" exclaimed the latter, after a moment of surprise and silence.

"Yes, I'm here," replied Wildnar in a strange tone.

His eyes were at once fixed upon the blossoms in the other man's coat.

"Where are you stopping, Felix?"

"At the inn," said the hussar sullenly.

"The inn!"

Astonished at the news, he was still further puzzled by his friend's manner.

"Yes. You had forgotten that there was an inn where I could go?"

There was a moment's silence. The bitterness beneath the commonplace words could not have escaped Altishofen. And he had a guilty consciousness that Felix might be angry to find him still in the Odenwald. "When did you arrive?" he asked quietly.

"I don't remember," answered Wildnar, so much in the tone of an angry child that Altishofen felt like smiling. He thought that Felix would soon explain himself, even if inadvertently.

"You should have stopped with me," he said in a careless tone, and added,

thinking to pacify him: "Come up with me now."

"I did not find myself urged to return when with you last," replied the other. "Besides," he added meaningly, "I am interested in something nearer the village."

"Meaning—"

"Meaning—a woman—of course."

Altshofen colored. He considered. Felix could not have met Catherine again since their mutual acknowledgment. If he had, she at least would certainly have mentioned it. His face cleared and he laughed. "You had better come."

"Thanks—no," replied Wildnar ungraciously.

"But the Colonel is coming!"

"Damn the Colonel!"

"The woman before the friend, eh?" Altshofen affected a jocular manner.

"We are alike, I fancy."

Wildnar continued to eye the blue flowers in the other's buttonhole in a strange way. He was very white and his lips trembled nervously.

"You are mad!" said the other man good-naturedly. And indeed this seemed true enough. He had ceased to associate Catherine with the matter.

Suddenly and without another word, Wildnar turned on his heel and walked away with an assumed jauntiness, unconsciously whistling his air from "The Tales of Hoffmann."

He was bewildered, dizzy, with the return of jealousy. Those accursed blue blossoms! Flowers so worn by Boris possessed a significance lacking in those he so often thrust through the buttonhole of his own coat. When had the other man ever so adorned himself until this fatal season of the flax? Foolishly devoid of reason, a mere trifle renewed, and seemed to corroborate decisively, his early distrust as to his rival's relations with the girl he now knew both loved.

During the week of his absence he had overcome such suspicions, and had at length determined to marry Catherine. The *mésalliance*—if it were one—he would make. He would lift her out of her false position; since Göben had been

fool enough, or indifferent enough, to leave her so unprotected. His heart had swelled with a new and strange tenderness. He, the German noble, would marry this English girl, the victim of a scandal. He felt that he had been misled by his jealousy. In spite of what had occurred and of all that he had accused her of, he had again believed in her goodness. He had exulted in his recovered faith in her.

And another idea had forced itself upon him when he had tried to explain to himself the contradiction between her blushes, the thrill in her voice, and the denial in the words of Catherine: Boris had told her of his relations with the Gräfin Arendt! He had perhaps warned her!

He decided that he would go to her and explain.

How could he explain? Could he tell the truth? Could such a girl as Catherine Hervy understand—be made to see that a man can love two women at the same time if not in the same way?

Sick at heart, he vacillated, always longing for the woman with a fire that consumed his sanity, and ever enraged afresh against Boris, who, he finally concluded, must be pursuing a pure girl with infamous attentions. He was a married man, and he must leave the girl alone. If necessary he would tell him so.

In this mood he had arrived at the village.

Then had come his chance meeting with his rival, and his new resolutions had vanished, his new faith in the girl had been again relinquished. Merely because he had seen some innocent blue flowers in his coat, the old doubts of her virtue, which he had succeeded in dismissing, had returned. He was prostrated with his sudden despair.

Those flaxflowers! They had been to that field together—alone—as secluded as if shut in by lock and key! Boris was not the man to decorate his coat thus, unless the blossoms were associated with a woman.

Intent upon his renewed suspicions, he turned to stare at the man he now hated, as he strode away from the village.

In that field Boris had found Catherine that first day, and that fateful place had been the scene of their rendezvous often enough, no doubt! He was suddenly blind with fury. They had fooled him.

With the same intensity in which he had thought of Catherine as pure, he then pictured her to himself as lost—a wanton. No, he would never marry her now.

His first impulse was to leave the Odenwald, but he finally decided that he would force Catherine to see him, to talk with him again. He would see her that evening. She should be made to listen.

XIV

EITEL, on entering the hall of the *jagdhaus* at twilight, started violently, and stood staring at a gun which lay upon the table.

Wildnar stepped from the embrasure of the window.

"It is I, Eitel," he said in a low voice. "The door was open and I entered. I have a message for the *fräulein*."

The words were not ominous, yet Eitel eyed him with fear. "She is not here," he stammered.

"Where is she?" The nobleman offered Eitel a coin, but he did not take it. "Come! You have seen money before."

"I am afraid!" said Eitel, trembling. "I am afraid!"

At that moment Catherine was heard approaching. She paused for a moment upon the stone steps; then as she entered the dusk of the room, Wildnar came forward, but without offering to take the hand she held out to him.

"*Endlich!*"

The word was like a suppressed cry, and he added in a tortured way: "I have no right to be here—except the right of necessity. I could not remain away."

At first Catherine found herself unable to speak. When she did, however, her voice was unshaken, although her heart leaped with a strange joy.

"You are not afraid?" asked Wildnar

in a strange voice, after the boy had left them.

"Of what?"

"Of me."

"Why should I fear you?" she asked gently.

"Do you know that we are alone here? Christine has gone to the village."

"How did you know that, Graf Wildnar?"

"I am stopping at the inn. Old Jasper told me the lady of the *jagdhaus* was alone." His wild air increased. His pale face seemed set and distorted with emotion.

"Yes," she added calmly, but recalling with dismay the insult offered her by the young man at their last meeting. And with this there was associated a dread which she failed to define. "Peter is away. He will not return before midnight. Why have you come? Should you have done so?"

"You may send me away. And I will go. The alternative is to listen to me, and I shall not harm you."

His voice had suddenly filled with a savage yearning. The moment he had heard her speak, Felix von Wildnar had known that, in spite of all he again believed as to her association with Boris, he should end by asking her to be his wife.

"Listen, Catherine Hervy! You have spoken to me of spiritual things—and you believe in a spiritual love," said he, with an effort at self-control. "I cannot imagine such a thing. Mine for you is so human that it is like the heat in my blood. It is clean—wholesome—but it is human passion—just that and nothing more. I am incapable of spiritual things. Spirit hasn't stirred in me. I'm only a man—neither higher nor lower."

His voice broke. He hesitated for a moment, then continued in a rapid flow of words which seemed to tear their way from his very heart.

"If there is a God who made me, he put the fire in me, and kept the other light from me. I don't want you to think that you are being offered anything more than I have to give. I want you—want you—imperiously—but only

as a man wants a beloved woman. I don't want a saint or a mystic—I want a woman—and I can be faithful."

With his unfortunate concluding words he evoked in the girl's mind the vision of another. Faithful? He?

He leaned toward her, speaking more slowly.

"You eluded me and my meaning the other day. And I was mad to speak as I did. In a way, you will always elude me. But I can make you feel for me what I do for you. I'm sure of it. I think I'd make a good father for your children. I've never done anything I'm ashamed of. If anything puzzles you about me—about my life—ask me frankly in regard to it. I—I—can explain. Give me an opportunity! I am perhaps an egotist. I have been much spoiled. But I love you. I want you. I want you as my wife. You could do as you liked with me! Can't I make you want me? Give me a chance!"

He stood before her quietly, but she received the impression that his self-control was endangered.

There was the old thrill at work pleading for him. His warmth, his vitality, his wholesomeness—and, yes, his passion—drew her irresistibly. Yet she seemed suddenly to feel the extraordinary nature of the fact that she was there alone with the man—surrounded with what was unknown, with forces which might be dangerous. She was uncomfortable, afraid. She was horrified at herself also, and grasped desperately at what she believed to be her self-respect. She could not forget that this man who spoke now of honorable love had first tried to win her lightly. And there was another woman who had a right to all he had to offer. In her stern judgment of him, he was unpardonable.

As if reading her thoughts, the man cried with a sudden change of tone: "Give me a chance to explain!"

"What?" she asked in a fierce defiance.

"That which is in your thought! Don't deny that you are thinking of her!"

"Oh!" The grief in the tone of the exclamation should have shown Wildnar

the danger of pursuing a forbidden subject. But he refused to be sane, and added, completing the ruin of his hopes: "She will tell you herself that I am free! She will come to you! After you see her you will understand!"

So the story was true, thought Catherine, appalled by his naive appeal. There was then a woman so closely bound to him that he had no need to speak her name.

The girl was so shocked that she had no reply for him. She knew then that she had hoped for a sweeping denial of that which she had heard of his relation to the Gräfin Arendt.

Losing all control, he leaned forward to better see the pale face confronting his own: "Tell me—was it Altishofen who put the idea of her into your head?"

Still there was no reply.

"You will not answer? You shield him? What is he to you? Answer me! I will know!"

"You are raving," said she coldly.

"Raving! No. But be careful. I don't want to insult you." He was trembling with emotion, with his dying hope. "I might say things you would not like to hear!"

"Say what you like!" murmured Catherine with pale lips, yet defiantly.

"I know—I know you are meeting Altishofen—secretly—in the forest—in that flaxfield! You were there with him today! I saw the flowers in his coat! Did you not give them to him?"

"Oh!"

She would have left him, but, suddenly angered, Wildnar detained her roughly by seizing her arm. He knew now that he had hoped she would deny, or protest.

"You shall listen! Do you think you have fooled me?"

"I!" she stammered.

"Yes—you! Come, be frank! You are safe with me! If you are interested in Altishofen, say so!"

The tears filled Catherine's eyes. Her pain was deeper than that caused by Wildnar. There was still that thing, lurking in the depths of her mind, a formidable shade of evil. And then also she felt a fierce disgust for herself,

for that in herself which she did not understand, for her heart which vacillated. For he still held her arm, and his touch thrilled her. She longed to throw herself upon his breast, to cry to him her love and her despair. She felt all this at the moment his insulting words reached her ears.

And, womanlike, she became cruel.

"I cannot answer you. You could never understand. I am sorry you are allowing yourself to act in a way you will regret."

"Listen!" he cried, casting all discretion aside. "Do you know that Altishofen is married? Do you know that?"

"Certainly I know that."

"And that is nothing to you?"

"Not in the way you mean. By what right do you intrude upon me? What am I to you? What are you to me? You are contemptible, for he is your friend!"

"Go on!"

"He is your friend!" she repeated, saying to herself that she must be vile to feel as she did, to long as she did for Felix, for his lips—

"He is my friend, is he? And is he yours? For he is married! Let him free himself—then win you! Let him free himself!" As he said this he left her, and turned away to walk to and fro in the shadowy room.

"I never knew such men existed!" she said bitterly.

At the moment she suddenly became again aware of fear—the fear of a memory. Would it leap into her mind, aroused by Felix?

The man beside her completely lost his head.

"No?" he cried childishly. "You have not known of such men? What of the story of your marriage? What of Raegener? What of Altishofen? Do you think I am worse than Altishofen? Come, be fair! *Wer liebt besser?* I—I—will marry you, Catherine. Will Altishofen? Can he do so? I am no married man. My love is no insult! It is *his* love which is an insult.

"Who loves best?" he repeated. "Listen! For I offer you my name!"

His Teuton arrogance tinged all his pleading, yet the unfortunate man meant all that was possible for him to mean of sincerity and honor; but Catherine's outraged womanhood felt the insult in his manner. She, in her pride of birth, with the knowledge of her own worth, must deny herself to a man who had the air of stooping to woo her. Yet she felt bitterly angry at him because of his power to move her.

"Oh, leave me!" she cried, and the tears covered her face.

As he saw her tears, the mood of the man again changed. Suddenly he himself wept, overcome, sobbing like a child.

"*Ach, lieber Himmel!* Where I go—I take you! You have eaten into my senses! I feel you—see you—hear you—you only—nothing else matters! Catherine—consider! For the last time—I speak—I beg—I entreat! I will marry you in spite of all! Think what I am offering you! Do you think for a moment that Göben would refuse my suit for your hand?"

Again his rash words, mistakenly chosen, conveyed an insult.

"I will never—never—marry you! Never! Never!"

With a cry the infuriated man again seized her arm. "You—you—love me! Don't deny it!"

"No! No! I do not!"

He turned her by her arm, twisting it, until their white faces were near each to the other, and stared at her in the dusk as if striving to read her secret.

"Then it is Altishofen! How far has it gone?" he cried. "How far has it gone?"

"Oh, you hurt me—you hurt me!" she cried.

He suddenly released her. "I hurt you!" he stammered. He stood peering at her, biting his lips nervously, considering.

"Do you know," he added slowly after a moment's silence, "that he or I—one or the other of us—must die?"

Catherine turned to him, a great grief transfiguring her face. "Oh, be a man!"

"Am I not a man then? Listen! You receive all I say as if it were an insult—when I offer you my name—a

thing he cannot do! I will tell you something." He was half strangled by his rage. "He and I will fight. And I shall try to kill him. Do you hear me? I shall try to kill him. But if I die—I shall stand between you dead as I could not alive! I know Altishofen!"

"Why, this is murder!" cried Catherine, horror-struck.

Entirely ignorant of Altishofen's character as it was known to Wildnar, she found it impossible to understand the young man's suspicions.

"If I can—I will kill him. I will kill him, I say! He has no right to love you! He!"

"Oh, don't say that! He doesn't love me! You are wrong!"

At that moment they heard Eitel running up the path.

With a face distorted by the passion of his jealousy, Wildnar turned to Catherine. "You have chosen between us! He shall never have you, I say!"

With a cry of anguish Catherine's reserve broke down utterly. She in her turn clung to him. "Oh, don't say such things! We are only friends! There is no harm in it!"

Wildnar's snarl was like that of a tortured animal. With his hands he seized hers, freeing himself. He thrust his face closer. "I don't believe you! Do you hear! I don't believe you! I know Altishofen!"

With a savage gesture he threw her from him, and left her.

It was all over then. In his mind the matter was definitely settled.

An illicit liaison with Boris had caused Catherine to refuse his own offer of marriage. He had no other explanation to make to himself. He speedily arrived at the fatal conviction that Boris had willfully misled him from first to last.

Catherine, face to face with herself, was forced to acknowledge that which existed between herself and Wildnar. It was not all on his side—that strange attraction! There was a call, distinct, unmistakable, and an answer.

And the answer came from a stranger within herself, a stranger whom she denied and tried fiercely to ignore.

What had she feared? *What was the*

thing she had dreaded to remember? Why had she felt that it might leap into her consciousness from the ambush of Felix's wild words? Amid the agitation of her heart and senses, it had not revealed itself. It remained hidden, mysterious, a secret menace.

XV

As Altishofen returned from his evening hunt at ten o'clock, he was startled by the sudden appearance of Wildnar, who stepped into the path before him as he turned to ascend the rocks which served as steps to his *jagdhaus*.

"You here, Felix?"

"As you see."

The other man tried in vain to feel at ease. "Come in!" he said, cordially enough.

"On one condition."

"And that is—"

"That you leave this place with me at daylight."

"Explain yourself! Come into the house. We will talk."

"We will talk—but briefly, and here!"

Wildnar's voice was hoarse with passion.

The drumming of the night insects trembled and quavered, a dull monotony of varied and plaintive cries. Within the house the keeper's wife was laying the table for Altishofen's late supper. He had a sick feeling that he should never care to taste anything again. A weariness like nausea overcame him. He saw clearly then that the mood of Felix had some relation to Catherine Hervy. He could merely repeat stupidly:

"Come in! Why don't you come in?"

"Enough of that!" said Wildnar roughly. "Answer me! Will you come with me—will you leave this place tomorrow?"

"Why should I?"

"Come with me!" the latter repeated violently. "I tell you, I will not leave you here with her. Women come and go in the lives of men like us. Very well. Tell me that this one is not for either of us!"

"I am not worthy of her," faltered

Altishofen, a deep flush upon his face. "You speak too lightly of her!"

"Very well. Then come with me," sneered the other. "If I have lost her—so have you—you—a married man!"

"One can't lose what one doesn't possess. How then could either of us lose Catherine Hervy?" There was a cold insolence in the tone. "Have a little common sense, Felix!"

"When a man talks about common sense it is because he longs to do something quite mad! Well, you'll not be allowed to go on with your madness! I warn you!"

"*Ach, lieber Himmel!* Felix, you go too far!" He felt that he could endure no more.

And the genuine grief in his tone impressed Wildnar. Once more he wavered in the conclusion he had drawn.

"I would give her up to you—since I cannot win her," he continued brokenly—"I swear it—if you could marry her! *Wer liebt besser?*" he asked, as he had asked of Catherine.

"If—I could marry her!" A world of anguished longing was in Altishofen's voice. He could not explain his position. "And you?" said he bitterly.

"I had the honor of asking the hand of Miss Hervy tonight. The escapade has resulted—with me—in an offer of marriage."

"And—"

"I was refused. And what has been refused me in marriage shall never be yours out of wedlock!" He shook his clenched fist wildly.

"*Ach, Gott!* You misunderstand the whole situation!"

"I am willing to be enlightened."

"I am unable to do so. The more I said the less you would understand."

"Enough!" cried Wildnar. "Not another word of that!" He made a threatening gesture. "You will leave here tomorrow?"

"I will not," replied his rival stubbornly.

As he spoke, he turned, and the starlight rested upon the flowers which Wildnar had seen in his coat earlier that day. They were faded now, but they

were there, with all that they had at first suggested to his imagination.

"Very well. Hell is in this. I warn you!"

And without another word he turned and went down the steps.

The flaxflowers! That field! He would watch it. He himself would remain, since Boris had refused to leave with him. He felt that he must know the truth. That much he promised himself. And then—then?

Altishofen felt stunned. It had come to that! Felix had wished to marry Catherine! A strange cruelty made him rejoice in the knowledge that he had been refused.

She was not for himself, either. But there still remained one hour before the end of their pleasant companionship. And he would not relinquish that at anyone's command.

XVI

THE flaxfield upon the summit of the mountain was in full bloom. The delicate flowers, radiant and gay, moved daintily as if in some mysterious dance under the spell of the summer breeze.

Tired, bewildered still by the scene of the previous evening, Catherine turned with relief to Boris, who was with her. She felt certain that he had not as yet seen Felix. She told herself that daylight had probably restored her mad lover's reason, that he was perhaps already with his regiment, and regretting his wild words. At any rate, she felt that her fears as to a duel between the two men had been unfounded.

And, denied by herself, there was a secret stir in her heart—a whisper—of a sentiment which intoxicated her. She had a strange conviction that she should see Felix again under different circumstances. She believed that he would come to her at least once more with his entreaties. All that had troubled her was forgotten.

They were together, Altishofen and Catherine, in the very center of the field, she sitting in the place where she had made her *lager* that day before the buds

were formed, and he lying stretched at full length beside her, deep in the sea of flowers. They were utterly isolated.

Altishofen was recalling an inconsistency common to men. He who does not refuse to wear a rose because he knows that it must fade, who does not refuse to sit in the light of the sun because he knows that it will set, refuses to see a charm in the love which is forbidden permanence. Why? He himself decided philosophically to make the most of his hour, although he recognized that it must be the last of such a platonic perfection. In a way Felix had been right in forbidding him any others like it.

Catherine watched him, wondering over his serious face and the stern expression of his brow and lips.

She was at ease with him, and neither sighed nor blushed as when with Wildnar. She longed for the courage to tell him of the visit she had had from the latter the night before, but was restrained by ominous thoughts which she could not entirely dismiss. She longed to warn him, to beg his promise that he would pardon any foolish insult by Felix which might precipitate a duel between the two young officers—even as she assured herself that what she feared would never occur. And could she ask such a thing when to introduce the subject at all would betray Felix?

Dreaming there in the sunshine, beside the woman who trusted him, Altishofen told himself that evil could not live on in such a rare altitude as that which was now his. But even as he reassured himself certain memories returned fatefully, forcing themselves into his mind. Violently he opposed the intruding and ominous thoughts, freeing himself from their obsession, but they left him depressed, discouraged. He opened his eyes and looked about him. "You have no fear of me?" he asked impulsively.

And with his words he recalled Felix to her—Felix, who had so recently asked her the same thing.

"No more than of the sunlight," said Catherine.

Altishofen fancied that he heard

loosened earth fall from the brink of the abrupt declivity at the edge of the field, where the path encircled it in its descent.

He rose to his feet, and making his way deliberately through the flowers, went to gaze down into the valley, only to find that the little irregular footpath was empty. Apparently not a soul but themselves was upon the hilltop.

He had not noticed the girl's emotion, having been so occupied with his own. And in the moment he stood there he again thought himself a man freed from evil. He was amazed to recall the attack upon his senses of the previous moment, so brief had it been, so easily conquered. He drew a long breath. He felt a sense of triumph.

Turning, he went slowly back to the place where he had left Catherine.

His face was white even under its tan from the intensity of his exaltation. She, too, had risen, and stood as if waiting for him, erect, slender, strong.

As he approached, he saw her smile in a strange way as if absorbed with thoughts which stirred her deeply. He did not know that Catherine was thinking of Felix at that moment. Unabashed, she stood as if one with the white light of noon, a slim and virgin creature still, but, for the first time, she suggested something to the man which puzzled him. As he came nearer, wading through the sea of flax, she threw aside the long white polo coat she wore, so that it slipped into the blue of the flowers as if into a wave. A strange thrill shook her at the thought of how it would have been at that moment if it had really been Felix himself coming to her across that field—and she alone with him, as she was then with Boris! She sighed—the sigh of a woman whose senses are stirred by love.

Coming quite close to her, as she stood speechless, exultant, with shining eyes, Altishofen trembled suddenly from head to feet.

He heard her sigh again with what seemed a revelation. Her personality burned through the garments she wore with all of the allurements one sex extends to the other. It was as if she unconsciously offered herself. There was

a deep blush upon her face. He could not know that the thought of another had brought it there. He believed his sudden rush of feeling for her to be reciprocated.

He was troubled, moved, afraid. The girl was no less pure, but the purity was that of a warm living woman, and the evil in him stirred once more. Suddenly he coveted her madly, violently. He stretched out his hands and grasped the form that tempted him, drawing it to him, only to find himself violently resisted.

Catherine had seen his eyes narrow evilly, his mouth set itself in a smile which transformed him, a smile savage, silly, and with it the dark red flush which covered his face. She saw that there was a something hidden there which she must pray never to understand. And then it came. In a flash she remembered all.

For in that second Altishofen became one with Raegener.

She was dumb; she did not cry out, or move. And the man saw that her lost memory had returned, and that something she had read in his face had restored it to her. With a hoarse cry he freed her, and for a moment stood as if waiting to be condemned.

"Now you know me as I am!" he cried. "Now you know me!"

Covering her eyes with her hands, Catherine sank at his feet, the blue flowers closing over her body like the waves of a sea.

With a gesture which expressed more than he could say, Altishofen turned from her. Maddened by his own self-condemnation and a fury of shame, he fled, leaving the path, and seeking the secret places of the forest.

XVII

BECAUSE he had seen the blossoms in the coat of Boris, Felix had taken the way which led to the flaxfield.

A wakeful night had been followed by a heavy sleep, which had lasted well through the morning hours, and, as fate would have it, he had arrived at the

verge of the sea of flowers, to see that the two he sought were together there. Maddened by his suspicions, he had hastened to conceal himself at the border of the field among some low alder bushes.

Witnessing their strange manner of parting, he had concluded that it had been prompted by their discovery of his presence. He had seen Altishofen seize the girl, and had believed that he did so in an effort to force her to leave the place with him. He had seen that she resisted this. The situation had puzzled him, but his brain had been in too crazed a state to realize its inconsistencies. He could only feel that from first to last Boris had lied to him, and that there was only one solution possible. To his bewildered sense, it seemed that the girl hid from him in shame, and that his rival fled, conscious of guilt.

Quite beside himself with the agony of his jealous anger, he had at once followed, but had failed to find him at the moment, for Altishofen, his strength leaving him, had fallen upon his knees behind a great rock, and so, himself hidden from view, had seen his pursuer pass him, leaping, stumbling, rushing on his way like a crazed animal, turning his head this way and that, cursing, raving, breaking through the thick undergrowth, on and on down the mountain side.

The revelation made by the sight of Wildnar's distorted face, so inflamed with fury, and the necessity to think instantly and clearly, brought Altishofen to his feet. In a second he saw the tragedy of the hour, and the fatality which could only be thwarted by evading his friend until sanity had returned to both of them.

No explanation of the scene could be given to Wildnar.

With horror he realized what must be in the mind of that other man, who had desired the woman also. He accepted with humility the fact that he should surely be called to account by Felix. But his own utter moral worthlessness only Catherine would know. He saw that her intuitions had told her the truth about himself. He went straight to his hunting lodge and for hours shut himself in his room alone with his grief and

shame, but with a curious sense of being himself again.

That night he wrote to her.

"I never have experienced as much suffering in one moment as in that when I saw a look of loathing grow upon your face. I feel tonight as one might feel after a terrible fall. I walked with you for a season in a heaven where the air was purer than any I have breathed before, but I fell. I shall speak plainly. I could never regain that height. It is not for me. And, Catherine, I see now that a man of my sort could not long be happy there. There may be men in the world who could exist at your moral altitude, but such a one must be either a virgin man whose mind is as clean as his body, or one of those rare men whose nature revolts against evil, and in the revulsion becomes more pure after his fall than before. The latter are the St. Augustines of life. But I am neither of these. I represent in myself a certain type of the man of the world in whatever country you may find him. There is a self-set curse upon such men.

"Catherine, if I were free to marry you, I am not the man for you. I have one consolation: I have not dragged you down with me. I could not have endured seeing you descend to me. You can have no realization of the contradictions—the inconsistencies—in the heart of a man like myself.

"Do you remember how we talked together today, before I lost my reason? I was sincere. I am capable of all such high interests. But they cannot hold me. And you could not.

"There is no blue, except that of heaven itself, so radiantly fresh as the blue of a field of flax. It is an expression of supreme innocence—one of nature's purest moods. And you stood in the midst of its blue, and I saw that you loved me.

"I beg of you, do not hate me! I suffer hell when I realize that it was I—and in such a way—who gave you back the memory you feared to recall. There is a door which even the gods cannot shut in a man's face. Naturally, in such pain as this, I consider it. But I shall not open it. I'm too great a coward.

"I shall never go into the mountains with their dawns and twilights, hear a bird or see a star, think of birth or of death or of any sweet, true or deep thing, but you will be in my thoughts. But it is only in such a way that I can love you, for aside from that I shall be—let me be honest at the last—just what you saw in my face at noon today.

"But I shall have the memory of having been for a short space of time something better. Since knowing you, Catherine, for the first time I have felt a knowledge stir within me as if it were a personal thing—perhaps that phenomenon men call a soul. Will that spark live on when you are no longer near me? Shall I extinguish it by my own acts? What will life be to me without you? And you? Where will your slender feet carry you? Here and there, now and then, all that I own in the way of what is good is yours.

"BORIS."

So, within the pages of a letter, Altishofen exposed the extravagance of his sentiment, his shame and a remorse so exquisitely expressed as to seem insincere. And, naively enough, he showed his mistaken belief in the meaning of the impulse which had actuated Catherine when she had risen to her feet to meet him as he went to her across the field.

XVIII

WHILE Altishofen wrote his letter, Wildnar wandered like some wild creature over the mountain side.

Earlier that night he had lurked about the *jagdhaus* where Catherine was, to see that Altishofen did not go there. He had, distraught with jealous anguish, pictured his rival admitted to be with her. He watched fruitlessly. So it was that he most fortunately missed Altishofen at the flaxfield.

Shortly after Altishofen had sent the letter he had written to Catherine, Wildnar appeared at the little house on the peak.

Soiled, bedraggled, stained with mire, his hands torn by brambles, he burst into the room where Altishofen was sitting

alone. He threw away his cigarette and rose to his feet.

For a moment the two stared at each other, speechless.

"There is a fool hereabouts," began Felix slowly, his eyes becoming deadly in their hate. "He cries over the blood of roebucks when he finds the spots in the forest. We will give him something more valuable to weep over."

There was no chance of mistaking the meaning of the words.

Altishofen advanced toward him. These men who had for years been like brothers glared now, face to face like wolves.

"Take care, Felix! It is you who are a fool!" he muttered. But even as he spoke, he turned from the other, as if in shame.

"And you! You—" Wildnar choked, beside himself, incoherent. But at the same time he stepped forward, forcing the other man to face him again.

"I am in no mood to listen to your ranting. Look at me!" Altishofen spoke now with assumed coolness. "Can't you see that I am as mad as you are?"

"I will kill you!" stammered the young man.

Once more Altishofen turned from him, sick at heart. "I would kill you, if I did not know that you are a better man than I," he said. "Listen, Felix! Listen—and then call me what you like!"

"You shall not speak! I've had enough of words!" the other man shouted in his rage.

"Very well. But I warn you—you misunderstand everything! And it is not your affair!"

Altishofen threw up his head with an air of defiance. After all, why should he explain? He was a leper; but his ache and his shame were his own. This was no matter for Felix to meddle with.

As Felix watched him his fury grew.

"What were you doing in that field?" he demanded.

"What do you think? Be careful!" But his bold words were contradicted by his manner, and Felix was quick to realize it.

"You— *Ach, mein Gott!* You! You!"

"You saw me? Very well. Listen! The girl is a saint. For her sake I'll explain!"

But Wildnar went madly to his doom.

"Saint! She's no other than a harlot! I happen to know the man who had met her secretly in a field of flax!"

"You liar!" shouted Altishofen, springing forward.

With a curse, Wildnar struck him, and then both stood as if transfixed by that to which they had been brought through the madness of the moment. It was then forever too late for words. These men were held by a tradition of their class, and from that time there was but one road for them to follow. The whole course of events to come flashed through both minds.

Suddenly, far beneath the house, the unaccustomed sound of wheels was heard. Someone had arrived, someone who would within a few moments come in upon them and find them as they were, with their passions flaming upon their faces.

Aghast, they stared at each other, madmen, each of whom had it in him at that moment to tear the life from the other ruthlessly, relentlessly.

Motionless they waited. Footsteps, deliberate and heavy, were now heard as someone mounted the flight of rocky steps. A moment later the door was thrown open by Bertram.

His white frightened face appeared for a moment, as he ushered Colonel von Elberfeld into the little room.

XIX

THREE hours later, Bertram and Minna still whispered together in the kitchen, with scared faces. They spoke in a low tone, and both listened attentively each time the voices of the men in the room above them were raised in anger or excitement.

At first there had been the sound of three voices, that of their master, low, broken-hearted in tone; that of the Herr Graf, rebellious, furious and sobbing; and then that other third voice, quiet,

compelling, which they could still hear, and which talked on and on.

When the bell at length summoned Bertram, it was the Colonel who rang it.

The keeper staggered out with the great tray, and the Colonel closed the door after him. He reported to Minna that the Herr Baron was sitting at the table, with his head on his arms. He was very quiet. The Herr Graf was at the window, and his neck and ears were red—very red. The old Colonel was very red also. He was smoking much, and was walking up and down the floor, up and down, up and down, and always between the two young hotheads.

Wildnar, at the window, looked out over the tops of trees upon hillsides covered with vines. Yet he saw it all from the shadow. He had lived through a day and night of tense emotion and he was very shaken.

Yet the Colonel, Baron von Elberfeld, had known what to say to him, as well as what not to say.

To the other, sitting with his blond head upon his folded arms, he had spoken but little as yet, although his sharp old eyes softened each time he looked at him. He saw in Wildnar a young fellow mad with youthful passion, a good officer. But, knowing that the situation might spell disaster, he yearned most over Altishofen, for he was of his own regiment.

"As I have said, it rests with you, gentlemen. Your case given to the court of honor—in three days it will be arranged: you will fight—and one of you will perhaps kill the other. The living friend will be sent to a fortress. He would be safe in feeling that he would not be given his leave."

Wildnar stirred restlessly. The other man did not move.

"You, Altishofen—have given Wildnar the lie. You have been struck by his hand in the face. Both the word and the act are supposed to demand that redress which is offered upon the field of honor, and there can be but one sequel to this affair if the matter goes before the military court. You must fight. You would be given your leave, did you not do so. You could not

remain with your regiment if you failed to arrange a challenge—if *this goes before them*," he repeated with a growing significance.

Then, very slowly, the Colonel asked: "Cannot we three keep silence? Is this thing irrevocable?"

Altishofen straightened himself in his chair, and folding his arms, looked steadily at his superior officer. Wildnar, turning from the window, took two steps forward and stopped, his arms straight at his sides, facing the old man, whose last words had cut the air like a whip.

There was then an oppressive silence. All three realized the import of the moment.

"This quarrel began—and continues—over a woman," the Colonel continued sadly. "The madness of youth has brought you both to this. A woman! A foolish reason to risk all that hangs upon a duel."

Each young officer made as though to speak in anger, but Elberfeld threw up his right arm with a stern gesture.

"Wait!" he said, and it was an order. Neither dared disobey. "Wait! I was young once," he added, and the words were only a whisper.

He continued to gaze uneasily at the floor. "I knew a man—we were brother officers. We were in the War School together. I—I loved him—very much. His was a simple nature—frank, sincere, direct, very human, not unlike Wildnar's here. It was in North Germany. We were two gay, carefree young officers. Well—"

The Colonel's voice became unemotional, almost casual, as he added very quietly: "He died by my hand in an honorable duel. He had insulted me. There was no other way. We fought, and he was killed. I killed him. He was a better man than I."

After a moment he added thoughtfully: "One of you will survive. Whichever it may be, he will say, in thinking of the other: 'He was a better man than I!' And in the night, each day, all of his life, the survivor will say: '*He was a better man than I—and I killed him.*'"

There was a long silence.

Both young men were now staring at the floor. Neither moved nor spoke. The older officer looked from one to the other anxiously.

"I—I am an old fellow," he said, "but I have loved women. I have loved women all my life. I have loved a woman for nineteen years—but with a difference—for she—she is more than a woman—she is my friend. It's all in that. Unless it is that way, the love of woman is a snare of nature—a trap—a delusion—a madness and an awakening."

In his last words he put the melody of his whole life, the truth that is spoken when death is near. It was as if he cried out a secret of the heart in order to restore the dying affection of two brothers.

"And, gentlemen, believe me—in the true, sweet friendship of man for man, there is something which is missed in the love of woman."

Wildnar saw that his rival was moved, influenced, by the words of the older man. This roused a peculiar resentment in his own breast, a cynicism. He threw out his arms with a stifled cry of scorn. For him, and such as him, the woman comes before the friend.

Altishofen saw the gesture and heard the exclamation. He stubbornly denied the right of Felix to call him to account about what concerned himself and Catherine Hervy, believing as he did that he possessed her love. He, in his turn, assumed the air of one who threatened. And as the two younger men faced each other, the heart of the older officer sank with his sense of the hopelessness of his effort. He fingered his stubby gray mustache, and looked sadly out of the window.

As he looked a shadow came between him and the light. Wildnar bowed before him in salute. The Colonel gave him his hand.

Turning, the hussar bowed formally to Altishofen.

Then, with a sob of fury in his throat but without a word, he left the room, not waiting to see that the other had risen to his feet, that other, who, as he listened

to the retreating footsteps of his friend, for one inconsistent moment longed to call him back.

The two dragoon officers, the senior and his subaltern, were left alone face to face.

XX

"WHERE is Wildnar stopping?"

"At the inn."

"Ah! Not with you?"

"Not this time."

"How long will it take him to walk there?"

"An hour and a half."

"And from there he will drive to Hirschhorn for the train? If you are determined upon a challenge—if you are—we must follow him tonight. I must call the court. Shall I lay the case before it? If it gets to them—you must fight. At first—a bullet seems the only answer—to the lie—or to the blow. But, Boris, there is another way—that of simple forgiveness. I don't want you to fight Felix. Come!"

The younger officer remained obstinately silent.

"And what of *her*?" the old man added. He laid one big hand on the shoulder of his favorite lieutenant. "Is she the sort of woman who would like to think that a man had been killed because of her?"

Altishofen thought: "I will fight him. And he shall kill me." He felt himself to be sincere in his wish for death, and it consoled him to realize that at least he was no coward. And later, after he was dead, someone would enlighten that fool Felix.

"Does the lady know of your quarrel?"

"No—that is—no."

"Does she suspect the situation?"

"I don't think so."

"Well," said the Colonel at last, "is it to be?"

"It must be," said Altishofen quietly. "There are reasons why I must send Wildnar a challenge. He will make it necessary for me to do so."

He thought of Felix with an odd pain. Their quarrel was astounding, incon-

ceivable, as existing between them. He had told his friend that his feeling for Catherine was above reproach. How could he ever explain that an obsession of the lowest animal passion had suddenly overturned a sentiment which had been so pure? And then he had lied. And Felix knew it. It was as if the very devil itself had confused the situation, and set a trap for them.

All day the older man remained with the younger one, making his affection felt in every act. Arrangements were made for their return to their regiment by the night train.

By sunset all was in readiness. There remained yet an hour before the commencement of the rough trip to the station in the mountain cart.

Altishofen recalled the past, unforgettable weeks. He knew that he had passed out of Catherine's life as certainly as if he had been engulfed by an earthquake. He thought of the brief part she had played in his. A broken refrain of tender and exquisite meaning, their friendship had possessed the pathos of a swift passing. And, as a tune melts into the air and so is lost, her pure affection had left him. The good in his nature again sharply defined itself, and he was tormented by a pang of inexpressible shame. His pale brow was covered by beads of moisture. He constantly assured himself that he should fall in the duel with Felix.

A bullet would finish it. His superstition grew. He felt more and more certain that the story would end in that way.

He regretted that he had never kissed her—had never kissed her lips. She—the one good, pure woman that he had loved purely—for an hour . . .

"What kind of a woman is she, Boris?"

Altishofen turned and looked at his old friend. He would have liked the peace which follows confession and absolution. Yet that could not be. His lips quivered and at first he was unable to speak.

The Colonel repeated his question, modulating his voice to fondness, coaxing for confidences.

"What kind of a woman is she?"

"She is a good woman."

"So! But there is—pardon me, my boy—there is Erda, Baronin von Altishofen!"

An unopened letter from her was lying on the table. Her husband frowned.

"I know."

"You would—if you could—make the woman you call a soul, your mistress?"

"Never."

"I understand," the Colonel said slowly. "I felt like that myself. After—well, I never tried to see her again. It was my expiation—my friend had loved her, too."

Altishofen was silent.

"She loves you—not Wildnar? Is it not so?"

"Yes." He believed this.

Then the Colonel said: "I saw the Gräfin the other day." After a pause, he asked, as if curious, yet dreading to open a delicate subject: "She—how much of it does she know?"

"That I cannot say. Only Felix could tell that."

"A very remarkable woman," said the Colonel.

"And Wildnar—really loves—the lady who is to remain unnamed?"

Altishofen stared at him. "Yes."

That must be true. Felix loved Catherine after his fashion. He considered. But what could his small agony amount to as compared with his own?

In hesitating words, the Colonel continued:

"I have known time to change many situations—very strangely changed—in unforeseen ways. A passion like Wildnar's must burn itself out. There is no other way. But it will burn out. With you—I know, with you . . ."

The old officer looked with wistful kindness at the younger one.

He was looking past the Colonel out of the little lamplit window into the tranquillity of the night. Suddenly, with one of those revulsions common to him, his thoughts altered.

What did it amount to—this small ache of his? Or the evil that was in him? He was merely an atom, of no more value than an insect.

It was Sunday evening. The *abendglocken* were ringing. Harsh, rough-toned bells when heard near at hand, they were softened now by distance, and melted into a faint melody.

Elberfeld cleared his throat. "Storms come into life which sweep us off our feet. We must regain them and go on—*vorwärts!* Our little lives must be lived—whether happily or not does not at all matter, but honorably, yes."

Minna came in to light the lamp. Bertram had gone down to the cart with their bags and heavy coats. The Colonel lighted a cigar. "Come!" he said.

XXI

As Catherine climbed her narrow stairway on her way to bed, upon the night after she had had her revelation of Altishofen's character, she heard a shot. It seemed somehow to express a fear that she felt. As she listened she heard another.

She called to Christine, who was in the little stone-flagged hall beneath, and asked her who was shooting at that hour. She felt afraid. A horror assailed her.

Christine explained that it was Peter, with one of his sons. They were firing blank cartridges near some fields to drive off the red deer. They would shoot until two in the morning.

Catherine told herself that she did not know what she feared, but it was not true. She had heard the rush of Wildnar's footsteps as he followed Altishofen, and she had raised her head from the flax long enough to recognize him. Not the least of her suffering lay in her fear of a possible duel between the two men.

She lay for a long time, as if in a stupor, but did not sleep. Again and again as the hours passed she heard firing. Peter and his sons were still abroad. Old Christine was asleep downstairs in the little room just off the kitchen. And she herself, on her balcony, felt as if swinging above the earth in space, weighing, judging, trying to understand it all.

She could never understand the storm

of human emotion of which she was the innocent center. Why had all these things happened to her? She—what had she done? Was life over for her? How could she fill all the long coming years?

One thing alone comforted her: the old fear of the shadow had gone. She had no dread of the unknown now. She was sane, and knew that she would remain so. The horror of madness had been exorcised by the pain of reality.

Toward dawn she slept. She was awakened by footsteps which approached the house. A few moments later Christine brought her Altishofen's letter, and she read it lying in her bed upon the balcony.

It filled her with an insupportable anguish, that strange unveiling of a human soul, which, as yet, inspired no pity in her. It was all true, and the truth was unanswerable. In a way she was relieved by Altishofen's words, for she saw that he would not try to see her again.

As she lay there, facing the new day, and the inexorable hours which were coming, her face was haggard. Her brows were drawn together in a frown, and her mouth set in stern lines. Secure in the sanity which had come through a shock such as had, years ago, deadened her memory, she faced certain facts, certain truths.

Scenes which had been hidden within her subconsciousness were revealed to her. She saw again the room within a great London hotel with its disarray of paraphernalia associated with travel. She even heard the ticking of the tiny clock in her toilet bag, over which she, the bride of a few hours, had been bending when Raegener had entered the room. She remembered clearly all that had followed.

He had been drinking. He had lurched toward her with outstretched arms. His indescribable speech had revealed a mind hopelessly contaminated. She, an innocent girl, had heard vile things put into words. Evil in its most diabolic guise had assailed her.

When she had evaded him he had pursued as she ran in terror around the

heavy table in the center of the room. He had ended by seizing her, and she had struck him in the face with the hand which still held the clock. As he stood, cursing, she had taken her heavy traveling cloak from a chair near the door, and, wrapping herself in it, had fled from the room, down the long corridors of the hotel and into the street.

She had never seen Raegener since.

Within an hour she had been in Frances's arms, and after she had sobbed out her story, she remembered Göben's white, stern face as, turning to his wife, he said:

"Take care of her, Frances. She is ours from this night. Leave Raegener to me."

She knew at length why such chivalrous attentions had since been lavished upon her by her brother-in-law, a man she so highly honored. She believed that Raegener had been forced to leave the army, because of his refusal to fight Göben. She was ignorant of still other reasons for his doing so.

Chiefly by reason of his blond beauty, so frequently seen among the youths of his race, her girlish imagination had pictured him as a Parsifal. She had found him to be a beast, as Göben had proved him to be a coward. Her infatuation had made her blind to the distrust of him felt by Göben and Frances, who had ended by permitting the marriage.

And, in remembering, Altishofen became one with Raegener. He was tainted in the same way. She had read this in his face, as inevitably as if he had used Raegener's words.

In her thoughts of Altishofen she was cruel, for good women forgive too much or judge too harshly. She read and re-read Altishofen's words: "I fell. . . . I could never regain that altitude. . . . It is not for me . . . women like you always end by hating men like me . . . a man of my sort . . . I beg you not to hate me . . . a coward . . ."

She saw that it was an honest letter, written by a bad man who understood himself. But it was a mistaken one. She saw that he had believed her in love with him—she who had been fighting against the attraction exercised over her

nature by Wildnar! The whole episode seemed impossible, monstrous!

She asked herself continually what there had been in her to attract two such men as Raegener and Altishofen? When in wine, Raegener had betrayed himself, had unmasked. As for Altishofen, unlike the former, his evil seemed a thing outside of himself, an obsession which mastered him, but she believed that his struggle against what was lower than himself was not sincere, except at rare moments. His letter proved that. Its sentiment was tainted, its remorse rang false. Even in writing it, he had not resisted the temptation to say exquisite things. The only honesty in it was his confession of badness, and even in this she received the impression that as he wrote he had been conscious of putting a repulsive truth into fine words.

And Felix, the wild one, the gay, light lover, he who had no soul! Had there been no Gräfin Arendt, how would it have been with Felix and herself?

He had been no more than an ordinary man, but she felt, through some deep and obscure instinct of her feminine nature, that he was clean. And he had been genuine; quite simply he had shown his true self, a barbarian perhaps, but one whose heart had been warmed by a sincere emotion. The girl recognized the abyss which separated the two men. It had remained to Altishofen, the platonic friend, to fill her soul with horror by his glance.

During the hours of pain which followed she busied herself in packing. She planned to leave at once. She would go straight to Frances.

And as she folded and put away her simple garments, she began that readjustment of her life which followed her recovery of a lost memory and a great disillusion.

Later she saw Bertram, Altishofen's man, talking with Peter in the road before the *jagdhaus*. She imagined that both men glanced at her window from time to time as if she were the subject of their gossip.

From Christine she received the information that Wildnar had left the Odenwald, and that he had gone alone.

Altishofen had remained. She felt a sense of great relief in believing that there would now be no duel.

In the evening Catherine tried to answer his letter. She found no means of expressing honestly that which she felt which did not seem cruel. And so she tore up the letter she had commenced. There was nothing to be said.

Alone as she was, she could not travel by night. She must wait for the morning train. Then she would go to Cassel, where she had left her maid, and from there to England. She would never return to Germany.

And in the morning she left the Odenwald.

As she stood at the top of the stone steps before the *jagdhans*, she followed with her eyes the path which led to the flaxfield. She knew that far up on the hilltop winds sighed as they came and went, touching tenderly the fading flowers, many of whose petals must have fallen. The blossoms were dead, and so was a friendship.

XXII

As to the arrangements for the duel, Altishofen was supremely indifferent.

Wildnar had written a letter filled with the grossest insults, the coarsest insinuations, a mad letter, with which, as Altishofen had foreseen, he had forced the challenge his opponent had been so reluctant to send. If he had refused to offer it, he would have been ostracized.

Nevertheless, the trouble between himself and Felix continued to be a secondary matter.

He felt himself to be going away from it all—away from everything, everybody. For, from the first, a superstition as to his own death influenced him. He felt a firm conviction that he was to die, and he thought little of Felix, aside from a dull resentment at having been so misunderstood by him. His thoughts busied themselves with Catherine alone—with her, and her opinion of him.

As she had realized, he labored under a complete misapprehension.

He continued to believe that his fall

had occurred at the moment when she had virtually offered him her love. He was too confused by his own pain to consider that Felix had acted with anything but an entirely incomprehensible stupidity and obstinacy. He gave no time to analysis, realizing little but his own shame, and in that he continued to find his chief torment.

As to Wildnar, the anger which had seized him that noon when he came upon the two he loved during their rendezvous in the flaxfield never left him. In the interval between that day and that of the duel, he scarcely ate or slept.

And so it was that, out of an accumulation of misunderstandings, he grew to feel a scorn for both Catherine and Boris, and turned, like a hurt child, to the older woman. And she went to him with a superb disregard of everything else in life.

The two men fought upon a day of the last week in July.

At dawn Altishofen awakened and went to stand at the window of his room in the little inn situated at the fork of two lonely mountain roads. It was an ideal shelter for those who sought seclusion. A light rain was falling.

Lieutenant Troth, his second, came in and had coffee with him, then went downstairs to greet Roedern, one of the witnesses, who was sitting in the big regimental carriage which was waiting before the place.

"The others have gone on ahead," said Roedern, adding in a low tone: "They stopped here. I find that extraordinary!"

"They stopped here—at this inn? How strange!" replied Troth in the same subdued voice. "They were to have put up at the Red Deer—on the other side of the mountain!"

"Yes. And—and—" The speaker nodded significantly.

"The Gräfin! Is it possible?"

"Yes. I saw a veiled woman arrive late last night. I didn't know that Wildnar was here then. And I asked. She had given her name—fearlessly."

"What a woman! And the Baroness?"

"I don't believe Boris has told his wife. I don't believe she knows anything about this mess."

Altishofen appeared in the doorway, his cold face set in its usual icy calm, but with a new pallor about it. He had been smoking a cigarette, and threw the stub away as he descended the steps and joined the two officers.

The carriage followed a rough road which led around the side of a mountain. Everything was drenched with the rain, and the sandstone boulders seemed washed clean. The bushes bent under the weight of the water which loaded their leaves. The smell of the wet green things of the woods which they were entering refreshed Altishofen, and he sniffed eagerly at the delightful air, conscious always that his companions were watching him slyly.

Roedern whistled softly between his teeth. Troth's underlip trembled a little, and his rather prominent blue eyes were troubled.

"What air!" exclaimed Altishofen. He drew a long breath, exhaling slowly.

At length they stopped. "We go on foot from here," said Troth in a mechanical tone.

At last they came upon a little group of men standing, huddled together in an open space, under a weeping sky. Boris recognized Felix. The latter would not look toward him, but, with a sick feeling, he felt sure that he was seen by him.

While the seconds talked, Altishofen stood miserably aside, alone. It seemed a long time before someone came to help him remove his coat. He threw his cap upon the earth, but Roedern picked it up, and Altishofen, watching him to see where he would put it, became curiously certain that he should never wear it again.

He heard voices, a lull, and then again voices. All this time he avoided looking at Felix, but he was conscious that he was now in his shirt sleeves, as he was himself.

He was waiting. They both were waiting.

The officers in blue and rose approached those in the black uniforms.

Then they separated. A line was measured across the grass while Altishofen and Wildnar observed the proceeding with a seemingly equal stupidity. Then each was led to the position designated.

Above the quiet voices of the seconds could be heard the gentle patter of the rain, although the sky was already of a lighter gray. The two men who stood apart, alone, facing each other at fifteen paces, saw that lots were being drawn, and that Troth was selected to load the weapons and give the word to fire. Roedern walked aside with Schuller. He was a good fellow. Altishofen eyed him grimly. He knew that the young man was deeply interested in his own wife.

There was a clicking sound, an exclamation of annoyance. He heard a word now and then, and understood that the conditions of the duel were being gone over anew by the seconds.

"So."

"You count . . . and distinctly . . ."

"Your watch . . ."

"One, two—and three, at the beginning, middle and end of the twenty seconds." The tone was that used in repeating parrotlike an already well learned lesson. "You understand: one—two—three!"

There was the swish of long wet grass as the men separated. One came nearer, and Altishofen, stupefied by the sensation, felt a pistol thrust into his hand.

Suddenly he became aware that an ordinary plaid steamer rug, which he had not seen before, lay upon the earth not far from him at his left. He wondered who had brought such a thing to the place, and why. Probably it belonged to the surgeon. While he was absurdly occupied by such considerations, he was surprised by a word spoken in strange tones.

"Ready!"

Starting violently, he straightened himself as if to meet that which was coming. His lips were trembling uncontrollably, but he felt no fear.

"One!"

His nervous forefinger found the trigger, and he raised his arm with a jerk.

During a fraction of time after the

count both men fired simultaneously. Altishofen, still with his eyes averted, had aimed as he believed well above the head of the slender figure directly opposite him.

He saw Felix standing after the shots, but he was impressed by his strange air. He seemed thinking deeply, puzzled. Then he sank slowly upon his knees, and with a peculiar limpness he fell forward flat upon his face into the long wet grass. His white hands beat upon it for a moment as if in boyish fury, then relaxed.

His second, Guckert, and Schuller, who was acting as a neutral witness, rushed to his side, followed by the surgeon, who threw his big black mantle upon the ground as he went.

Altishofen watched them calmly as they turned Wildnar over upon his back.

The rain fell softly upon his upturned features, which looked white, ill-tempered, childishly pettish; and mingled with the crimson drops which stained the turf his breast had pressed. Then, as the three black figures knelt beside him, the form of the young officer was hidden from him. Troth and Roedern joined the group.

He tossed his pistol aside, and he saw that it fell upon the steamer rug, but he himself did not move from where he stood until his second, after having hastily left the others, gave him his cap and his coat, and with his arm about his shoulders hurried him toward the path.

Altishofen hung back, reluctant, in an effort to watch the group they were leaving, but Roedern joined them and he and Troth urged him on, until, just at the edge of the cleared space, all three turned to look behind them.

Felix still lay sprawled upon the wet grass, the surgeon kneeling beside him, but the two seconds had risen and were standing. The summer rain softened the sharpness of their slender black outlines. As Altishofen and those with him waited, they saw the surgeon rise slowly to his feet. Then he and the two husars bared their heads with a strange, awkward air.

Troth, whose teeth were chattering, seized Altishofen roughly, in anguish,

and tried to pull him away from the spot. But, seemingly fascinated by what he saw, he resisted, until Roedern took his other arm, and after a moment he went with them.

Troth repeated constantly: "Come! Come!"

And after they had entered the carriage which awaited them, he still muttered: "Come! Come! We'll soon be there!"

Roedern seemed nauseated, blue about the lips, and swayed as he sat, as if about to fall from his seat each time the wheels struck a rock or the huge vehicle swerved in the sharp curves.

Altishofen occupied himself in a vain effort to button his coat. He was astonished at the demeanor of his companions.

As they descended the hill, he searched for those objects which he had noticed during their ascent. The rain had ceased, but the sun was still hidden, and the rocks, moss and dripping bushes which lined the way seemed gray, sodden, ugly. The great lumbering carriage in which they rode creaked and jolted, with the brakes on, while the feet of heavily built army horses that drew it splashed in muddy puddles or crushed the pebbles beneath their iron shoes. Troth and Roedern remained silent. Both were very pale, and seemed exhausted.

Altishofen examined his own sensations. He found himself very calm, yet he realized perfectly all that had occurred. He had killed Felix. He himself still lived, and he became more and more absorbed with his surprise at that fact.

As they stopped before the inn, he leaned to look up at its windows, impelled by some obscure impulse. As he did so a woman peered from one of them, half hidden by the white curtain, which she held before her as a screen. As she saw Roedern and Troth in their blue and rose uniforms leap from the carriage, she leaned boldly out.

Stricken, woeful, aged in an hour, Sophie, Gräfin Arendt, gazed down at Boris, Baron von Altishofen, while he stared back at her, dumb, yet appealing. He did not know until much later that,

during the last night of his life, the tears of Felix had fallen upon the bosom of the woman who had had the greatness to transform her love for him into a passion of sympathy.

Altishofen turned away from the accusing gaze, and tried to leave the carriage. He felt himself suddenly alone. He was surprised to find that he could no longer see his friends, although he heard Troth saying quietly to someone: "Here! Take these things!"

The voice seemed a long way off, and while gravely considering the reason for that, he fainted.

XXIII

NEVER to return to Germany! So Catherine Hervy had thought.

Yet a year and four months after the day she left the Odenwald alone, she found herself again at the *jagdhaus*, with her brother-in-law and his wife. A child had been born to them within the year and had died, and they had been still further united by their joy and grief. Catherine was their only guest.

Although once more surrounded by the scenes which were associated with that which had preceded a tragedy, she found that they, in themselves, had so altered that they but faintly revived memories of a former May and June. It was October. The autumn air was keen and bracing, suggesting frosts.

Within the *jagdhaus* all was bustle and cheer. In the living room a fire roared in the big tiled stove. Each post loaded the tables with messages from friends, papers and magazines. Göben had brought some dogs with him, and they lay sleepily upon the floor luxuriating in the heat.

"Listen to this, Catherine," said Frances. And she read from a letter which she held—the first she had opened.

It had been written by an English friend, a woman who had married, as Frances had, a German officer, and who had, like her, found happiness in her marriage.

"The Gräfin Arendt is here. I think you know her. She is simply topping,

and seems very little changed, although they say that all real interest in life ended for her at the death of Graf Wildnar.

"I never met him. But I understand that he was very handsome, and gifted with great personal magnetism. He was killed in a duel with that Baron von Altishofen—the one with the wife who is such a belle. They are in Egypt now, as the Baron is attaché there. It seems that the Gräfin Arendt had always been platonically hipped about Graf Wildnar, and gossip has it that she was with him at some little inn during the night before his death. The duel was associated with a mysterious scandal—one which will perhaps never be explained, as no one has ever been able to surmise who the woman of the affair was."

She paused to look at her sister.

Catherine made no comment. So! *She* had followed Felix to the little forest inn! The last words of his ardent lips, his bitterness and grief, were memories now belonging only to that other woman!

Frances continued reading:

"I have seen the Gräfin several times during the week, always exquisite, and always so remote from, if not above, the rest of us. Still she dominates each group of which she may form a part with an inexplicable force, which one feels but may not describe.

"She was certainly the love of Felix von Wildnar's life. The creature he fought over could have been nothing to him as compared to her."

Frances paused in the reading of the letter. She watched the girl, with kind, sympathetic eyes, as she rose and went to the window which faced the road. She asked herself, as so many times before, why such a creature as her sister should have attracted to her life the things of the very abyss itself. The old fear for the girl's reason, however, had been finally removed through the reassuring words of alienists.

She had suspected from the first that her sister's grief over the duel and the death of Felix von Wildnar had been more personal than had ever been admitted by her.

The girl at the window thought of Boris, recalling the night when he had carried her down the mountain in his arms. Her eyes roamed to where one sparkling star hung above a distant hill-top. It was the height upon which lay the flaxfield—the field which had been transfigured by an ideal of friendship which had been an exaggeration, unreal.

So he was in Egypt! His shooting lodge had been let to strangers.

And Felix—always at the thought of him the old thrill came. He had loved her for an hour. It could not have lasted. Perhaps it had already passed when he had called that other woman to his side on the night before his duel with Boris. She knew that Felix had died believing her light, possibly even the mistress of his friend. But constantly her heart called his name—a deep instinct prompting her knowledge that, in some secret of sex, he had been her true mate, and that she should know no other.

Frances had laid the letter aside, and Catherine took it up.

"... *The creature he fought over*". . .
"The creature he fought over" . . . She studied the sentences.

"Karl is late," remarked Frances, going to the window in her turn.

"It is only ten," said Catherine, glancing at the clock.

Just then they heard footsteps. The door flew open, a ruddy, smiling face appeared, and the husband of Frances entered. Something shone in his merry and candid eyes which suggested cleanliness and sanity. He had known sorrow, but there was that about Karl von Göben which lifted courage to its feet. And the world that held him held others like him.

The two women who went to meet him felt this.

"Dinner is ready!"

"And I shall be in a moment."

The master of the house, with twinkling eyes, sniffed the rich odors of venison and red cabbage which Christine, following him into the room, hastened to place upon the already loaded table. Rubbing his chilled hands, he passed into an inner room. The dogs followed him, and so did his wife.

From within he called in a genial voice: "Christine, have you brought up the Margoux from the cellar?"

Catherine answered: "She brought it up an hour ago."

Smiling, Christine busied herself with opening a bottle of warm red wine.



AT DAYFALL IN THE STREETS OF SAMARCAND

By Clinton Scollard

AT dayfall in the streets of Samarcand,
 (Oh, that enchanted land!)

I saw two dusk-dark eyes above a veil;
 And lo, it was as though the nightingale
 Had voiced its deathless yearning; was as though
 Hafiz had sung of love with all the glow
 Of golden long ago!
 Love took me by the hand,
 At dayfall in the streets of Samarcand,
 Led me and lured me in impassioned wise,
 And oped for me the gates of Paradise!

IN THE MARKET PLACE

By George Sterling

Rev. xviii, 10-13

IN Babylon, high Babylon,
What gear is bought and sold?
All merchandise beneath the sun
That bartered is for gold:
Amber and oils from far beyond
The desert and the fen,
And wines whereof our throats are fond—
Yea, and the souls of men!

In Babylon, gray Babylon,
What goods are sold and bought?
Vesture of linen subtly spun,
And cups from agate wrought;
Raiment of many-colored silk
For some fair denizen,
And ivory more white than milk—
Yea, and the souls of men!

In Babylon, old Babylon,
What cargoes on the piers?
Pearls from a tepid ocean won,
And gems that are as tears;
Arrows and javelins that prevail
Against the lion's den,
And brazen chariots and mail—
Yea, and the souls of men!

In Babylon, mad Babylon,
What get you for your pence?
A moiety of cinnamon,
Of flour and frankincense;
But let the shekels in your keep
Be multiplied by ten,
And you shall purchase slaves and sheep—
Yea, and the souls of men!

In Babylon, dark Babylon,
What chattels shall invite?
A wife whenas your youth is done,
Or leman for a night.
Before Astarte's portico
The torches flare again;
The shadows come, the shadows go—
Yea, and the souls of men!

A FLOOD

By George Moore

IT seemed to him that he was in very cold, muddy water full of little waves, and that by treading water and putting forth all his strength he was able to keep himself above them. But the wind blew them higher; they slapped him in the mouth, and he had much trouble in getting his breath between. All of a sudden it occurred to him that it would be much easier to abandon this painful striving and to lie back amid the waves. He took a long, deep breath, the water slipped down into his lungs, and he lay quite natural and comfortable until a dinning sound began over his head. He tried to sink deeper into the stream, but the noise grew louder, and he could not but think that he was rising to the surface. At last he opened his eyes.

"It's this infernal rain on the roof that makes me dream," he said.

A bed had been made up for him in the kitchen on three chairs, and when he awoke he found himself sitting bolt upright with his arms bent as if he were treading water, his legs stiff and numbed with cold. The hearth was full of ashes, with a last spark fading in the dawn light; and catching an end of his blanket, he rubbed his hands against it. His perceptions lengthened out and he went to the window, but seeing water everywhere, he fancied for a moment that he must be still dreaming. The pigs had broken out of their styes and were swimming amid various wreckage; the house dog was swimming alongside of his kennel; the hens rose in short flights—two were already drowned, the others were drowning—but the cock perched on his coop crowed defiantly. Tom looked to where the day was break-

ing; a thin, pale light soaked slowly through the clouds, and he could just distinguish the top of the willows above the water.

The staircase behind him creaked, and turning hurriedly, he saw old Daddy Lupton, awful in his nightshirt, like Death himself coming to bid him good morning.

"Well," said Daddy, "what do 'ee think about the jade now? She makes one feel young again. The biggest flood we've had these fifty years."

The old man's levity inspired hope in Tom that the river would not rise any higher, and that the house was not in danger. Tom asked him if this were so, but Daddy continued to babble of a great flood of sixty years ago in which he had nearly lost his life. A big flood it was, but nothing to the great flood of nearly eighty years ago. It had carried a village quite away, and the old man followed Tom to the window, telling him how the water had come down the valley faster than a horse could gallop.

"All my brothers and sisters were drowned, father and mother, too; but the cradle floated right away as far as Harebridge, where it was picked up by a party in a boat. There ha'n't been no flood to speak of since then. A fine jade she once was, and when it rained like this we used to lie quaking in our beds. Now we sleep sound enough."

"I must wake 'em," said Tom.

He rushed upstairs, called out, and in a few minutes the pointsman and his family were standing in the kitchen: John Lupton, a tall man with a long neck and thin, square shoulders, a red beard and small, queer eyes and hands freckled and hairy, and Margaret Lup-

ton, his wife, a pleasant, portly woman of forty, with soft blue eyes and regular features. Her daughter, Liz, took after her father—a thin-shouldered, thin-featured girl with small, ardent eyes and dark reddish, crinkly hair. But Billy, Liz's brother, took after his mother. He was very like her, the same soft oval face with blue eyes and no distinctive feature; the same sweet, retiring nature, more of a girl than a boy; but the boy in him expressed a certain curiosity for Tom's boat.

"Shall we go in the boat, father?"

"What boat, sonny?"

"Tom's boat."

"Tom's boat wouldn't hold us all."

"We needn't all go together."

"My boat is far enough from 'ere by this time," said Tom, "or most like she's at the bottom of the river. I tied her last night to the old willow."

Tom was a fair-complexioned, broad-shouldered young fellow, an apple grower that lived on the other side of the river. He and Liz were to be married at the end of the week, and yesterday being Sunday, he had rowed himself across at sundown, and they had gone for their wonted walk. When they came home supper was on the table, and the hours after had gone by pleasantly, his arm being round Liz's waist, till the time came for him to bid her good night, but on seeing the swollen river she had turned her pretty freckled face to his and dissuaded him, and they had returned to the cottage.

"I never seed the river rise so quickly afore," said Lupton.

"I did. I did."

It was Daddy that had answered. He was still in his nightshirt, and his last tooth shook in his white beard.

"Go and dress 'eeseelf, father. And why, mother, don't 'ee light the fire? The morning is that rare cold we'll all be the better for a cup of tea."

"Yes, father, I won't be long now," and she began breaking sticks.

While the kettle was boiling Tom told them that the pigs had broken out of their styes; they lamented the loss of their winter food, and Billy burst into tears on hearing that Peter—his friend,

Peter, the house dog—had gone away, swimming after his kennel.

"Come, let us sit down to breakfast," Lupton said.

But they had hardly tasted their tea when Billy cried out:

"Father, father, the water be coming in under the door yonder. Take me on 'ee knee, father. 'Ee did promise to take me to Harebridge. But if I drown I shall never see the circus."

Lupton took the little chap on his knee.

"There will be no danger of that. Grandfather will tell 'ee that this be nothing to the floods he knew when he was a little boy."

The water continued to come under the door, collecting where the asphalted floor had been worn, and they watched it rising out of these slight holes and coming toward the table. It came at first very slowly, and then suddenly it rose over their knees, and while Mrs. Lupton took the baby out of the cot the others searched for tea, sugar, bacon, eggs, coal and candles.

"We shall be wanting all these things," Lupton said, "for the water may keep us upstairs for hours to come."

And they were very wet when they assembled in Lupton's bedroom. Lupton emptied his big boots out of the window and called on Tom to do the same. Liz wrung out her petticoats, and standing round the table they supped their tea and ate some slices of bread and butter. The baby had been laid asleep on the bed, and Daddy sat by the baby, softening his bread in his mug of tea, mumbling to himself, his fading brain full of incoherent recollections.

"The folk in them fine houses will be surprised to see the water at the bottom of their parks," said Lupton, to break an oppressive silence.

"They be like to live so high up the water will never reach them," Mrs. Lupton answered.

"It hain't like them to think for to send us 'elp."

"They 'aven't no boats up yonder," said Tom. "They be a good mile up from the river."

"Tom, dear, it's a pity your boat be gone, for you might have row'd me right into Harebridge."

"Yes, Liz, if you'd set still I might have taken 'ee through them currents, or as likely we might have gotten sucked under by an eddy, or a hole be knocked in the boat by some floating baulk."

"I be lighter than Liz; would 'ee take me, Tom?" said Billy.

As the tops of the apple trees were still visible they judged the depth of the water to be about ten feet. Cattle passed the window, some swimming strong and well, others nearly exhausted. A dead horse whirled past, its poor neck stretched out lamentably, and they all laughed at the fox that floated so peacefully in the middle of a drowned hen roost. The apples came by in great numbers; Billy forgot his fears in his desire to clutch some, and a little later they saw two great trees rolling toward the pointsman's box.

"There she goes!" cried Lupton. "And how she do swim! She'd put me into the quay at Harebridge as well as a steam packet."

There was nothing to do but to watch and wonder if the flood were rising. Liz was certain it was sinking, and pointing to a post, she said there was no sign of it ten minutes before. Lupton was not so sure, and when the post disappeared, which it did a few minutes afterward, there could be no hope at all that the flood was not still rising, and then everyone began to wonder what the cause of the flood might be, and everyone, except Daddy, waited for Lupton to speak. But he was loth to tell them that he could only understand the great rush of water if the embankments up yonder at the factories had broken, and if that were so, "God help them!" As Lupton said these last words their faces grew paler, all except Billy, who returned innocently to his grandfather to ask if he didn't think the flood was as big now as the great flood of sixty years ago.

"It be a flood and a big one, but the biggest of all was eighty years ago, when my cradle was washed away down to Harebridge and stuck fast in the alder." And he began to tell a story of other

children whose cradles had been carried just down to the sea, frightening everyone with his loquacity.

"Tom, 'as 'ee a bit of baccy to give to Daddy to stop his jaw with?" said John Lupton.

Tom fumbled in his pockets, and when their eyes met each read his own thoughts in the other's face.

"We must be doing something, that's certain," said Tom. "But what shall we be doing?"

"Yes, we must be a-stirring," Lupton answered. And without another word he began to look about the room. "Now, if we 'ad but a few bits of timber we could make a raft. It's a pity that bedstead is of iron."

Tom, who had gone back to the window, cried suddenly:

"Give a hand here, John, for 'ee was talking about a raft, and blowed if I 'av'n't gotten one."

And looking over Tom's shoulder, Lupton saw that he had caught a few planks tied together—a slender raft that somebody up yonder had launched as a last hope.

"Very likely so," said Lupton; "anyhow it is ours. It might carry one of us."

"Yes, one of us might chance his life on it and bring back 'elp."

"That's right enough; it's an off chance, but one of us had better risk it. Get along, lad, get along, and come back in a boat."

"Don't leave me, Tom," cried Liz; "let us be drowned together."

"Be 'ee mazed, lass?" said Lupton. "For Tom will manage right well on them planks, and he'll come back in a boat."

"No, father, no; I'd sooner die with Tom than live without him."

"'Ee ain't the only one; 'ee'd better let him go or yonder church will see no wedding party next Monday. Tom, get astride of them planks at once."

"I think I'd better take this 'ere shutter with me," and while it was lifted from its hinges Lupton lashed two broom handles together.

"Not much of a punt hole, but the best I can give, and maybe it will get 'ee out of the current."

But Liz held Tom back.

"Yes, Liz, Tom loves 'ee and that is why he must go. Come, girl, hands off. I don't want to be rough with 'ee, but Tom must take the risk of them planks. Now, Tom."

And away he went in a swirl, trying his best to reach bottom with his broom handles, but the raft rolled in the current, and Liz's last sight of her lover was when he attempted to seize some willow branches. The raft slid from under his feet, and he fell into the flood.

"He's gone from 'ee now, and we shall soon follow after if we don't bestir ourselves."

"It matters naught to me now," said Liz.

"I ne'er seen one mazed like 'ee afore."

"But I seed many; sixty years ago all the sweethearts were parted, and by the score. The jade got them, here a girl and there a boy, all but Daddy Lupton, for a wise woman said she shouldn't get 'im, and her words came true. I ain't afraid of 'er. I've seen 'er in worse tantrums than today. It's the rheumatics that I'm afraid of. These 'ere walls will be that damp, will be that . . ." The old man's voice died away in the whiteness of his beard.

At that moment three tiles fell from the roof; a large hole appeared in one of the walls, and they all felt that the house was falling about them bit by bit. But the immediate danger was from the great baulks that the current swept down. If any one of these were to strike the house, Lupton said, it must topple over into the flood; and lest their luck shouldn't last, Lupton took a sheet from the bed and climbed onto the roof.

"See a boat coming, Liz?" her mother asked, for Liz sat looking toward some willows as if she saw something.

"No boat will come for me. I want no boat to come for me."

"Come, Liz, come, Liz, I wouldn't have 'ee talk like that," her mother answered. The baby began to cry for the breast, and while suckling Mrs. Lupton raised her head to her husband sitting on the broken wall, but he waved the sheet so despairingly that she did not dare to ask him if a boat were coming.

"I can't sit up 'ere any longer," he said at last. "Let us do something. I don't mind what, so long as it keeps me from thinking."

"I think we'd better say our prayers," said Mrs. Lupton.

"Prayers? No, I can say no prayers. I'm too bothered; I want something that will keep me from thinking. The babbling of that water will drive us mad if we don't do something. Let us tell stories. Liz, don't sit there looking through the room or what's left of it. You read stories in the papers—can't you tell us one of them?"

Liz shook her head. He asked for the paper; she answered that it was downstairs, and begged that she might take his place on the corner of the wall and wave the sheet on the chance that a boat might be passing within hail.

"She don't pay no attention to what we're saying," said Lupton. "Now that Tom's gone I think she'd just as lief make away with herself. And what may 'ee be smiling at so heartily, father? 'Ee and the baby are the only two that can smile this morning."

"What be I smiling at? I heard 'ee speak just now of stories. I can zay one, lots of 'em."

"Then tell us a story, father, and a good one. It'll keep our thoughts from that babbling water."

"Well, I was just a-thinking. It be now seventy years ago . . ."

"Well, tell us about it."

"I've said it was nigh seventy years ago; I was a growing lad at the time. I remember it as if it were yesterday. Me and Bill Slater was pals. At that time Bill was going to be married; I can see her now, a fine, elegant lass, for all the world like our Liz. It had been raining for weeks and weeks—much the same kind of weather as we've had lately, only worse, and the river—"

"We don't want to hear about the river; we want to forget it. I suppose 'ee wants to tell us that Bill Slater and his lass was drowned? We don't want that sort of story; we wants a cheerful story with lots of happiness in it."

"I only knows stories about those that the river took—plenty of 'em, plenty of

'em. The jade didn't get me, for a wise woman said that she would never get me."

"Did she say, Daddy, that them that was with 'ee was safe, too?"

Daddy was sure only of his own safety; and waking suddenly he said: "I've 'eard John say that 'ee would banish thinking with something. Us better have some cards then. Cards will wake us up."

"The old chap's right," said Lupton. "Where be the cards? Be they downstairs too? Where's Liz?" Lupton climbed to her place, and after looking round he turned to those in the room and shook his head. "I'm afraid Liz has gone after her sweetheart."

"Very likely," said Daddy. "The jade always gets them in the end. Where be the cards?"

"Yes, where be the cards?" Lupton answered almost savagely. "Be they downstairs, mother?"

"No, John; they be in the drawer of the table."

"Then let's have them out. What shall we play? Halfpenny nap? Come, mother, and Billy, too, and Daddy. Come, pull your chairs round. I gave 'ee sixpence yesterday, father. Find them out; 'ee can't have spent them. And, mother, have 'ee any coppers?"

"I've near a shilling in coppers. That will do for Billy and myself."

As there were only three chairs, the table was pulled up to the bed where Daddy was sitting.

"Come, let us play, let us play," Lupton cried impatiently.

"I'm thinking of the baby," said Mrs. Lupton. "How unsuspecting he do sleep there!"

"Never mind the baby, mother; think of your cards."

After playing for some time Lupton found he had lost threepence.

"I never seed such luck," he exclaimed.

They played another round; again Lupton went nap and again he lost.

"Perhaps it will be them that loses that'll be saved," he said, shuffling the cards.

"Father, I can't play," said Billy.

"Why can't you play, my boy? Ain't mother a-teaching 'ee?"

"Yes, father, but I can't think of the cards; dead things be floating past the window. May I go and sit where I can't see them?"

"Yes, my boy, come and sit on my knee. Look over my cards; but 'ee mustn't tell them what I've gotten."

"Grandfather seems to be winning; he has gotten all the coppers, father."

"Yes, my boy, grandfather is winning."

"And what will he do with the winnings if he be drowned, father?"

"Grandfather don't think he will be drowned."

The old man chuckled, and turned over his coppers. His winnings meant a double allowance of tobacco and a glass of ale, and he thought of the second glass of ale he would have if he won again.

"Whose turn is it to play?" said Daddy.

"Mine," said Lupton, "and I'll go nap again."

"'Ee'll go nap again."

Lupton lost again, but this time, instead of cursing his luck, he remained silent, and at that moment the rush of water beneath their feet sounded more ominous than ever.

"I'll play no more," said Lupton. "I dunno what I be doing. There's naught in my poor head but the babbling of that water."

A tile slid down the roof. They sprang to their feet, and then they heard a splash. The old man played with his winnings and Billy began to cry.

"It's sure and certain enough now that no help will come for us," said Mrs. Lupton. "Let's put away the cards and say our prayers, and 'ee might tell us a verse out of the Bible, John."

"Very well, let's have a prayer. Father, give over counting your money."

"Then no one be coming to save us!" cried Billy. "I don't want to drown, father. I be too young to drown. Grandfather's too old and baby too young to think much about drowning. But if we drown today, father, I shall never see the circus."

"Kneel down, my boy; perhaps God might save us if we pray to Him."

"Oh, God, merciful Saviour, who has power over all things, save us! Oh, Lord, save us!"

"Go on praying, mother," Lupton said, as he rose from his knees; and taking another sheet from the bed, he climbed to the top of the broken wall; but he had hardly reached it when some bricks gave way and he fell backward and drowned. Mrs. Lupton prayed intermittently, and every now and then a tile splashed into the water.

"The way to manage 'er is to take 'er easy. She won't stand no bullying, and them giddy young folks will bully 'er, so she always goes for 'em."

Five or six tiles fell; the house rocked a little, and they could feel the water lifting the floor under their feet.

"Mother," said Billy; the child was so calm, so earnest in his manner, that he seemed suddenly to have grown older. "Mother dear, tell me the truth—be I going to drown? We have prayed together, but God don't seem like saving us. I'm afraid, mother; bain't you afraid? Father's gone and Liz's gone and Tom's gone, all except grandfather and us. Grandfather and the baby don't seem afraid. Mother, let me 'ave your 'and; 'ee won't lose hold of me."

Mrs. Lupton took the baby from the bed and looked at it, and when she looked up she saw the old man playing with the coppers he had won.

"Does drowning hurt very much, mother?"

The wall wavered about them; some bricks fell out of it. Billy was struck by one, struggled a little way, and fell through the floor. The floor broke again, and another piece of the roof came away, and Mrs. Lupton closed her eyes and waited for death. But death did not seem to come, and when she opened her eyes she saw that the floor had snapped at her feet and the old man was standing behind her.

"A darned narrow escape," he muttered. "As near as I have had yet."

"They're gone—they be all gone, all of them. Baby and all."

"'Ee must have let her slip when the roof came in."

"I let the baby slip!" And looking down she saw the child floating among broken things.

"Well, that was a narrow escape," chimed the quaking voice of the octogenarian. "I'm sore afraid the house is in a bad way. I seed many like . . ."

By some great beams the south wall still held firm, and with it the few feet of floor on which they were standing.

"They be bound to send a boat afore long, or else the wise woman . . . Everything's gone—table, cards and a shilling in coppers."

"They're all gone; everything is gone."

"Yes, the jade's got 'em. She 'as brought near everyone I knew at one time or the other."

Then the wild grief of the woman seemed to wake reason in Daddy's failing brain.

Her eyes were fixed on the bodies of her husband and child, dashed to and fro and sucked under by the current, appearing and disappearing among the wreckage.

"I can't grieve like that; I ken grieve no more. I'm too old, and all excepting me baccy and the rheumatics are the same to me now."

"Saved!" cried a voice. "Give way, my lads, give way!"

"Saved, and the others gone!" cried Mrs. Lupton, and as the boat approached from one side she flung herself into the flood from the other.

"Are you the only one left?" cried a man as the boat came alongside.

"Yes, the jade 'as got all the others. There they be down there; and my daughter-in-law has just gone after them, jumped right in after them. But it was told by a wise woman that the jade should never get me, and her words come true."

"Now then, old gent, let me get hold of you. Be careful where you step. Do nothing to risk your valuable life. There you are, safe, safe from everything but the rheumatics."

"They be very bad at times, and I must be careful of myself this winter."

PERTINENT AND IMPERTINENT

By Owen Hatteras

SEEING THE WORLD

Nothing broadens and mellowes the mind so much as foreign travel.

—HERACLITUS.

THE scene is the brow of the Hungerburg at Innsbruck. It is a half-hour before sunset, and the whole lovely valley of the Inn begins to glow with mauves and May greens, red-gold and silvery blues. Along the peaks of the great snowy mountains which shut it in, as if from the folly and misery of the world, piercing touches of yellow and crimson already show. Far below, hugging the winding river, lies little Innsbruck, with its parks and pretty villas. A battalion of Austrian soldiers, drilling in the Exerzierplatz, appears as an army of pale blue ants. Somewhere to the left, beyond the broad flank of the Hungerburg, the night train for Venice labors toward the town.

It is a superbly beautiful scene, perhaps the most beautiful in all Europe. It has color, dignity, repose. The Alps here come down a bit and so increase their spell. They are not the harsh precipices of Switzerland, nor the too charming stage mountains of Northern Italy, but rolling billows of clouds and snow, the high-flung waves of some titanic but stricken ocean. Now and then comes a faint clank of metal from the funicular railway, but the tracks themselves are hidden among the trees of the lower slopes. The tinkle of an angelus bell (or maybe it is only a sheep bell) is heard from afar. A great bird, an eagle or a falcon, sweeps across the crystal spaces.

Here where we are is a shelf on the mountainside, and the hand of man has

converted it into a terrace. To the rear, clinging to the mountain, is an Alpine *gasthaus*—a bit overdone, perhaps, with its red-framed windows and elaborate fretwork, but still genuinely of the Alps. Along the front of the terrace, protecting sightseers from the sheer drop of a thousand feet, is a stout wooden rail.

A man, in an American sack suit, with a Derby hat on his head, lounges against this rail. His elbows rest upon it, his legs are crossed in the fashion of a figure four, and his face is buried in the red book of Herr Baedeker. It is the volume on Southern Germany, and he is reading the list of Munich hotels. Now and then he stops to mark one with a pencil, which he wets at his lips each time. While he is thus engaged, another man comes ambling along the terrace, apparently from the direction of the funicular railway station. He, too, carries a red book. It is Baedeker on Austria-Hungary. After gaping around him a bit, this second man approaches the rail near the other and leans his elbows upon it. Presently he takes a package of chewing gum from his coat pocket, selects two pieces, puts them into his mouth and begins to chew. Then he spits idly into space, idly but homerically, a truly stupendous expectation, a staggering discharge from the Alps to the first shelf of the Lombard plain! The first man, startled by the report, glances up. Their eyes meet and there is a vague glimmer of recognition.

THE FIRST MAN—"American?"

THE SECOND MAN—"Yes: St. Louis."

"Been over long?"

"A couple of months."

"What ship'd you come over in?"

"The *Kronprinz Friedrich*."

"Aha, the German line! I guess you found the grub all right."

"Oh, in the main. I have eaten better, but then again, I have eaten worse."

"Well, they charge you enough for it, whether you get it or not. A man could live at the Plaza cheaper."

"I should say he could. What boat did you come over in?"

"The *Maurentic*."

"How is she?"

"Oh, so-so."

"I hear the meals on those English ships are nothing to what they used to be."

"That's what everybody tells me. But, as for me, I can't say I found them so bad. I had to send back the potatoes twice and the breakfast bacon once, but they had very good lima beans."

"Isn't that English bacon awful stuff to get down?"

"It certainly is: all meat and gristle. I wonder what an Englishman would say if you put him next to a plate of genuine, crisp, *American* bacon?"

"I guess he would yell for the police—or choke to death."

"Did you like the German cooking on the *Kronprinz*?"

"Well, I did and I didn't. The chicken *à la* Maryland was very good, but they had it only once. I could eat it every day."

"Why didn't you order it?"

"It wasn't on the bill."

"Oh, bill be damned! You might have ordered it anyhow. Make a fuss and you'll get what you want. These foreigners have to be bossed around. They're used to it."

"I guess you're right. There was a fellow near me who set up a holler about his room the minute he saw it—said it was dark and musty and not fit to pen a hog in—and they gave him one twice as large, and the chief steward bowed and scraped to him, and the room stewards danced around him as if he was a duke. And yet I heard later that he was nothing but a Bismarck herring importer from Hoboken."

"Yes, that's the way to get what you want. Did you have any nobility on board?"

"Yes, there was a Hungarian baron in the automobile business, and two English 'sirs.' The baron was quite a decent fellow: I had a talk with him in the smoking room one night. He didn't put on any airs at all. You would have thought he was an ordinary man. But the 'sirs' kept to themselves. All they did the whole voyage was to write letters, wear their dress suits and curse the stewards."

"They tell me over here that the best eating is on the French lines."

"Yes, so I hear. But some say, too, that the Scandinavian lines are best, and then again I have heard people boosting the Italian lines."

"I guess each one has its points. They say that you get wine free with meals on the French boats."

"But I hear it's fourth rate wine."

"Well, you don't have to drink it."

"That's so. But, as for me, I can't stand a Frenchman. I'd rather do without the wine and travel with the Dutch. Paris is dead compared to Berlin."

"So it is. But those Germans are getting to be awful sharks. The way they charge in Berlin is enough to make you sick."

"Don't tell me. I have been there. No longer ago than last Tuesday—or was it last Monday?—I went into one of those big restaurants on the Unter den Linden and ordered a small steak, French fried potatoes, a piece of pie and a cup of coffee—and what do you think those thieves charged me for it? Three marks fifty! Think of it! That's eighty-seven and a half cents. Why, a man could have got the same meal at home for a dollar. These Germans are running wild. American money has gone to their heads. They think every American they get hold of is a millionaire."

"The French are worse. I went into a hotel in Paris and paid ten francs a day for a room for myself and wife, and when we left they charged me one franc forty a day extra for sweeping it out and making the bed!"

"That's nothing. Here in Innsbruck they charge you half a krone a day *taxes*."

"What! You don't say!"

"Sure thing. And if you don't eat breakfast in the hotel they charge you a krone for it anyhow."

"Well, well! What next? But, after all, you can't blame them. We Americans come over here and hand them our pocketbooks, and we ought to be glad if we get anything back at all. The way a man has to tip is something fearful."

"Isn't it, though! I stayed in Dresden a week, and when I left there were six grafters lined up with their claws out. First came the *porteer*. Then came—"

"How much did you give the *porteer*?"

"Five marks."

"You gave him too much. You ought to have given him about three marks, or, say, two marks fifty. How much was your hotel bill?"

"Including everything?"

"No, just your bill for your room."

"I paid six marks a day."

"Well, that made forty-two marks for the week. Now the way to figure out how much the *porteer* ought to get is easy: a fellow I met in Baden-Baden showed me how to do it. First, you multiply your hotel bill by two, then you divide by twenty-seven, and then you knock off half a mark. Twice forty-two is eighty-four! Twenty-seven into eighty-four goes about three times, and a half from three leaves two and a half. See how easy it is?"

"It *looks* easy, anyhow. But you haven't got much time to do all that figuring."

"Well, let the *porteer* wait. The longer he has to wait the more he appreciates you."

"But how about the others?"

"It's just as simple. Your chambermaid gets a quarter of a mark for every day you have been in the hotel. But if you stay less than four days she gets a whole mark anyhow. If there are two in the party she gets half a mark a day, but no more than three marks in any one week."

"But suppose there are two chambermaids? In Dresden there was one on day duty and one on night duty. I left at six o'clock in the evening, and so they were both on the job."

"Don't worry: they'd have been on the job anyhow, no matter when you left. But it's just as easy to figure out the trip for two as for one. All you have to do is to add fifty per cent, and then divide it into two halves, and give one to each girl. Or, better still, give it all to one girl and tell her to give half to her pal. If there are three chambermaids, as you sometimes find in the swell hotels, you add another fifty per cent and then divide by three. And so on."

"I see. But how about the hall porter and the floor waiter?"

"Just as easy. The hall porter gets whatever the chambermaid gets, plus twenty-five per cent—but no more than two marks in any one week. The floor waiter gets thirty pfennigs a day straight, but if you stay only one day he gets half a mark, and if you stay more than a week he gets two marks flat a week after the first week. In some hotels the hall porter don't shine shoes. If he don't he gets just as much as if he does, but then the actual 'boots' has to be taken care of. He gets half a mark every two days. Every time you put out an extra pair of shoes he gets fifty per cent more for that day. If you shine your own shoes, or go without shining them, the 'boots' gets half his regular tip, but never less than a mark a week."

"Certainly it seems simple enough. I never knew there was any such system."

"I guess you didn't. Very few do. But it's just because Americans don't know it that these foreign blackmailers shake 'em down. Once you let the *porteer* see that you know the ropes, he'll pass the word on to the others, and you'll be treated like a native."

"I see. But how about the elevator boy? I gave the elevator boy in Dresden two marks and he almost fell on my neck, so I figured that I played the sucker."

"So you did. The rule for elevator boys is still somewhat in the air, because so few of these bum hotels over here have

elevators, but you can sort of reason the thing out if you put your mind to it. When you get on a street car in Germany, what tip do you give the conductor?"

"Five pfennigs."

"Naturally. That's the tip fixed by custom. You may almost say it's the unwritten law. If you gave the conductor more, he would hand you change. Well, how I reason it out is this way: If five pfennigs is enough for a car conductor, who may carry you three miles, why shouldn't it be enough for an elevator boy, who may carry you only three stories?"

"It seems fair, certainly."

"And it is fair. So all you have to do is to keep account of the number of times you go up and down in the elevator, and then give the elevator boy five pfennigs for each trip. Say you come down in the morning, go up in the evening, and average one other round trip a day. That makes twenty-eight trips a week. Five times twenty-eight is one mark forty—and there you are."

"I see. By the way, what hotel are you stopping at?"

"The Goldene Esel."

"How is it?"

"Oh, so-so. Ask for oatmeal at breakfast, and they send to the livery stable for a peck of oats and ask you please to be so kind as to show them how to make it."

"My hotel is even worse. Last night I got into such a sweat under the big German feather bed that I had to throw it off. But when I asked for a single blanket they didn't have any, so I had to wrap up in bath towels."

"Yes, and you used up every one in town. This morning, when I took a bath, the only towel the chambermaid could find wasn't bigger than a wedding invitation. But while she was hunting around I dried off, so no harm was done."

"Well, that's what a man gets for running around in such one-horse countries. In Leipzig they sat a nigger down beside me at table. In Amsterdam they had cheese for breakfast. In Munich the head waiter had never heard of buckwheat cakes. In Mannheim they charged me ten pfennigs extra for a cake of soap."

"What do you think of the German railroad trains?"

"Rotten. That compartment system is all wrong. If nobody comes into your compartment it's lonesome, and if anybody *does* come in it's too damn sociable. And if you try to stretch out and get some sleep, some ruffian begins singing in the next compartment, or the conductor keeps butting in and jabbering at you."

"But you can say *one* thing for these German trains: they get in on time."

"So they do, but no wonder! They run so slow it would be impossible *not* to get in on time. The way I figure it, a German engineer must have a devil of a time holding his engine in. The fact is, he usually can't—and so he has to wait outside every big town until the schedule catches up to him. They say they never have accidents, but is it any more than you expect? Did you ever hear of a mud turtle having an accident?"

"Scarcely. As you say, these countries are far behind the times. I saw a fire in Cologne: you would have laughed your head off! It was in a feed store near my hotel, and I got there before the firemen. When they came at last, in their tinpot hats, they got out half a dozen big squirts and rushed into the building with them. Then, when it was out, they put the squirts back into their little express wagon and drove off. You never saw such child's play. Not a line of hose run out, not an engine puffing, not a gong heard, not a soul letting out a whoop. It was more like a Sunday school picnic than a fire. I guess if these Dutch ever *did* have a civilized blaze it would scare them to death. But they never have any."

"Well, what can you expect? A country where all the charwomen are men and all the garbage men are women!"

For the moment the two have talked each other out, and so they lounge upon the rail in silence and gaze out over the valley. Anon the gumchewer spits. By now the sun has reached the skyline to the westward and the tops of the ice mountains are gorgeous conflagrations. Scarlets war with golden oranges, and

vermilions fade into palpitating pinks. Below, in the valley, the colors begin to fade slowly to a uniform seashell gray. It is a scene of indescribable loveliness: the wild reds of hades splashed riotously upon the cold whites and pale blues of heaven. The night train for Venice, a long line of black coaches, is entering the town. Somewhere below, apparently in the barracks, a sunset gun is fired. After a silence of perhaps two or three minutes, the Americans gather fresh inspiration and resume their conversation.

"I have seen worse scenery."

"Very pretty."

"Yes, sir; it's well worth the money."

"But the Rockies beat it all hollow."

"Oh, of course. They have nothing over here that we can't beat to a whisper. Just consider the Rhine, for instance. The Hudson makes it look like a country creek."

"Yes, you're right. Take away the castles, and not even a German would give a hoot for it. It's not so much what a thing *is* over here as what *reputation* it's got. The whole thing is a matter of press-agreeing."

"I agree with you. There's the 'beautiful, blue Danube.' To me it looks like a sewer. If *it's* blue, then *I'm* green. A man would hesitate to drown himself in such a mud puddle."

"But you hear the bands playing that waltz all your life, and so you spend your good money to come over here to see the river. And when you get back home you don't want to admit that you've been a sucker, so you start touting it from hell to breakfast. And then some other fellow comes over and does the same, and so on and so on."

"Yes; it's all a matter of boosting. Day in and day out you hear about Westminster Abbey. Every English book mentions it; it's in the newspapers almost as much as Jack Johnson or Caruso. Well, one day you pack your grip, put on your hat and come over to have a look—and what do you find? A one-horse church full of statues! And every statue crying for sapolio! You expect to see something magnificent, something enormous, something to knock your eye out and send you down

for the count. What you *do* see is a second rate graveyard under roof. And when you examine into it, you find that two-thirds of the graves haven't even got a dead man in them. Whenever a prominent Englishman dies, they put up a statue to him in Westminster Abbey—*no matter where he happens to be buried*. I call that clever advertising. That's the way to get the crowd."

"Yes, these foreigners know the game. They have made millions out of it in Paris. Every time you go to see a musical comedy at home, the second act is laid in Paris, and you see a whole stageful of girls doing the bunny hug, and a lot of old sports having the time of their lives. All your life you hear that Paris is something rich and racy, something that makes New York look like Roanoke, Virginia. Well, you fall for the ballyho and come over to have your fling—and then you find that Paris is largely bunk. I spent a whole week in Paris, trying to find something really awful. I hired one of those Jew guides at five dollars a day and told him to go the limit. I said to him: 'Don't mind *me*. I am twenty-one years old. Let me have the genuine goods.' But the worst he could show me wasn't half as bad as what I have seen in Chicago. Every night I would say to that Jew: 'Come on, now, Mr. Cohen; let's get away from these tinhorn shows. Lead me to the real stuff.' Well, I believe the fellow did his darndest, but he always fell down. I almost felt sorry for him. In the end, when I paid him off, I said to him: 'Save up your money, my boy, and come over to the States. Let me know when you land. I'll show you the sights for nothing. You need a little relaxation. This Baracca Class atmosphere is killing you.'

"And yet Paris is famous all over the world. No American ever came to Europe without dropping off there to have a look. I once saw the Bal Tabarin crowded with Sunday school superintendents returning from Jerusalem. And when the sucker gets home he goes around winking and hinting, and so the fake grows. I often think the government ought to take a hand. If the beer is inspected and guaranteed in Germany,

why shouldn't the shows be inspected and guaranteed in Paris?"

"I guess the trouble is that the Frenchmen themselves never go to their own shows. They don't know what is going on. They see thousands of Americans starting out every night from the Place de l'Opéra and coming back in the morning all boozed up, and so they assume that everything is up to the mark. You'll find the same thing in Washington. No Washingtonian has ever been up to the top of the Washington Monument. Once the elevator in the monument was out of commission for two weeks, and yet Washington knew nothing about it. When the news got into the local papers at last, it came from Macon, Georgia. Some honeymooner from down there had written home about it, roasting the government."

"Well, me for the good old U. S. A. These Alps are all right, I guess—but I can't say I like the coffee."

"And it takes too long to get a letter from Jersey City."

"Yes, that reminds me. Just before I started up here this afternoon my wife got the *Ladies' Home Journal* of month before last. It had been following us around for six weeks, from London to Paris, to Berlin, to Munich, to Vienna, to a dozen other places. Now she's fixed for the night. She won't let up until she's read every word—the advertisements first. And she'll spend all day tomorrow sending off for things—new collar hooks, breakfast foods, complexion soaps and all that sort of junk. Are you married yourself?"

"No; not yet."

"Well, then, you don't know how it is. But I guess you play poker."

"Oh, to be sure."

"Well, let's go down into the town

and hunt up some quiet barroom and have a civilized evening. This scenery gives me the creeps."

"I'm with you. But where are we going to get any chips?"

"Don't worry. I carry a set with me. I made my wife put it in the bottom of the trunk, along with a bottle of real whiskey and a couple of porous plasters. A man can't be too careful when he's away from home."

They start along the terrace toward the station of the funicular railway. The sun has now disappeared behind the great barrier of ice and the colors of the scene are fast softening. All the scarlets and vermilions are gone: a luminous pink bathes the whole scene in its fairy light. The night train for Venice, leaving the town, appears as a long string of blinking lights. A chill breeze comes from the Alpine vastness to westward. The deep silence of an Alpine night settles down. The two Americans continue their talk until they are out of hearing. The breeze interrupts and obfuscates their words, but now and then half a sentence comes clearly.

"Have you seen any American papers lately?"

"Nothing but the Paris *Herald*—if you call *that* a paper."

"How are the Giants making out?"

"... badly as usual . . . rotten . . . slump . . . shake up . . ."

"... John McGraw . . . Connie Mack . . . glass arm . . ."

"... homesick . . . give five dollars for . . ."

"... whole continent without a single baseball cl . . ."

"... glad to get back . . . damn tired . . ."

"... damn . . ."

"... damn . . ."



TRUE democracy exists among mortals only when they are helpless, as when drunk, in coffins or at the breast.

TELEPATHY

By Ford Madox Hueffer

THERE were seven barristers round the fire of the Dormy House. They had come for golf and were talking legal gossip. There was also a judge of the King's Bench, who was a very old gentleman, dozing in a high settle. He had been fishing all day; he considered golf an anæmic pastime.

Their talk passed from cases to the bogeys of the local course, and from them, by way of a silly pun that an aged K. C. allowed himself, to the ghost of the Dormy House, which was partly an ancient structure. The ghost was an ordinary ghost and one beneath the speculations of educated and skeptical men, so a bright young man with a good practice in the divorce courts turned the talk onto telepathy. They talked of clients whose brother had appeared to them in India though they lay dead in Banff—the usual sort of thing. . . .

The old judge, with his high features and predatory, hooked nose, said suddenly, and with a sort of savage emphasis:

"Now this is true, mind you," and he continued to gaze at the fire. They none of them knew him at all well personally, and they all feared him a little, so they held their tongues.

"It's not that sort of stuff," he continued, "that you hear from cracked clients and old laundresses on circuit. It happened to me. I witnessed it with these two eyes and ears."

He sat looking at the fire for quite two minutes longer, and, as their bread or promotion might at any moment be affected by him, they sat looking attentively at the rather dreadful old man, holding thin fingers toward the blaze.

"It was when I was a solicitor," he began. "You know I was a solicitor

before I read for the bar. McCalmont, of Corrachie—that wasn't his name—sent for me to go to Corrachie—that wasn't the place—about his will. The question of domicile came up; he had not lived much in Scotland. He was the McCalmont of Corrachie, but he had been born in India and had had to make a fortune on the London Stock Exchange before he could buy Corrachie back, and so on. The will does not matter. It all went to a nephew in the end, and quite properly.

"But he gave me a couple of days' fishing. You all know I would sell my soul for two days' fishing on Loch Corrachie. The first evening we did pretty well. The next morning we were up early. We did so-so till the sun got too bright, and then we just drifted about the lake—we might have got five miles from Corrachie. There was a big thunderstorm going on up in the hills to the north but the lake was as still as a looking glass. I'd better explain to you the shape of the loch. It was like the figure eight, like that—but with a very small top to it. Where the two parts joined, it might have been a quarter of a mile broad, and there was a ferry there, and Corrachie House stood behind a huge crag. We couldn't see it at all from the lower lake.

"But the point of the formation of the lake was that when it rained heavily in the hills to the north, the upper part of the lake filled up with a furious sort of spate—it was as still as a millpond at other times—and the water came shooting through the narrow part, where the ferry was—like a regular fountain or a river bar. You follow me?

"Well, we drifted on the lake, about

five miles from Corrachie. We tried some lunch, but it was hot and glaring. The McCalmont began to get fidgety; it was as if the thunder up in the hills upset him. He began to look queer—frightfully queer, and then he seemed to fall into a doze.

"Suddenly he sprang up and exclaimed to me—I thought he was going to overset the boat:

"‘They’re fishing a man out of the water in front of the house! I could see them—a fat man, like a Turk or a Levantine, in an astrakhan coat. He’s got a big wart on his forehead—if the fishes haven’t eaten it off. . . .’

"He went on gibbering like a lunatic for a second or so. But I said:

"‘My good sir, it’s a nightmare. You *would* eat too many fish sandwiches, and the sun’s hot. You couldn’t possibly see the house. We’re five miles away, and Gamlyn Crag’s between us and it. . . .’

"He grew calmer and a bit ashamed of himself in a minute or two, and we got some very good sport before sunset.

"When we got back to Corrachie we heard that about half past three they had fished out of the lake, by the ferry, the body of a fat, dark man in an astrakhan coat, with a wart on his forehead."

The old man stopped speaking. The barristers sat silent, awaiting deductions or morals, but, since none came, the divorce court barrister, who had less reason to fear the judge professionally, exclaimed with a note of triumph:

"Well, that’s a pure case of telepathy."

The judge gave a sort of snarling grunt. But he said no more, and a barrister who had a large chamber practice said that undoubtedly there were waves. They emanated from us in moments of great emotion, and certain brains were sensitized.

"That Levantine," the judge snarled suddenly, "had been dead and rotten for a week. He couldn’t have sent out any waves—except bad smells."

The barristers were dismayed. One of them said:

"Then—then?"

"Precisely," the judge remarked. "If you weren’t so carried away by that fee-

ble, modern nonsense, you would have applied your brains, which ought to be practised in sifting evidence, to what was a pretty good problem. So should I have if I hadn’t been an unholy young idiot in those days."

He went on after a pause:

"That Levantine was taken for a tramp who had fallen into the water. His shirt was marked with the letters ‘F. K.’ and that was all there was to him.

"I didn’t hear anything more about the case for nearly twenty years, and then a woman calling herself Mrs. Fiodor Kratich wrote to me and said that, being upon the point of death, she wanted to make over a family picture and three or four bits of silver with the arms of McCalmont on them, to the heir—the nephew—of my McCalmont of Corrachie. So that was the end of the story and I hope it knocks the theory of telepathy to smithers in your minds."

The old judge paused and began to doze. None of them spoke until the divorce court barrister brought out with exasperation the words:

"But hang it all, Sir Reginald, what’s your story all about? Why should the fact that a woman with the name of a Russian Jew wanted to restore some McCalmont relics to the McCalmont family have anything to do with an obvious case of telepathy in the Western Highlands? She’d probably picked them up from some other Russian Jew in the Ratcliff Highway and felt sentimental about them."

The old judge exclaimed: "Good God!" in tones of almost despairing contempt, and then, after a long period during which he still appeared to be dozing, he sat up alertly and said:

"I suppose I must explain to your papfed minds. But what’s to become of the English bar? Anyhow, that’s no affair of mine—I shall be out of this world in a year or so. Now listen:

"‘F.K.’ were the letters on the tramp’s underclothing. Mrs. Fiodor Kratich was the name of the woman who, on her deathbed, wanted to restore the McCalmont relics—Mrs. Kratich was living in Hove in a small house on 250 pounds a

year that she had as an allowance from an unknown source.

"On a day when a great thunderstorm might be trusted to wash out the upper loop of Corrachie Lake the McCalmont of Corrachie predicted that the body of a man—who, as it proved had the letters 'F. K.' upon his linen—would be washed out of that upper loop and caught right off as it bobbed through the narrows. What do you get out of that? Nothing, I suppose.

"Well, then, I'll tell you. The real name of Mrs. Fiodor Kratich was Mrs. McCalmont, of Corrachie. McCalmont had married her at some time during his wanderings in search of the fortune he afterward made. Then she had gone off with the man Kratich. McCalmont had allowed them 250 pounds a year, but it hadn't been enough for them to live on because Kratich was an idle, gambling sot. So one day, when money was at its very lowest with them—I deduced this

myself; Mrs. Kratich only knew that Kratich disappeared—one day after McCalmont had bought the Corrachie estates again Kratich went off to beg from the McCalmont an increase of their income. I dare say he whined, and possibly he even threatened to tell the tenants that the McCalmont had a wife who had run away from him and was living with another man. Anyhow, the McCalmont was perfectly justified in strangling him and chucking him at night into the lake in front of the house. I don't know how he killed him—strangled him no doubt. But anyhow he chucked him into the lake, and it didn't take much of a telepathist to tell that he would come bobbing out when the water from the thunderstorm washed down from the hills."

They were all silent, and then the divorce court barrister said:

"Well, I call that a stupid story. There doesn't seem to be any point to it."

But the old judge had gone to sleep.



THE ENEMY

By Louisa Fletcher Tarkington

YOU shall not come between me and the light,
You shall not block the path my soul has set.
Though I must lift and bear you all the way,
Though I must seize and bind you to my side,
I'll wear you as the warrior wears his shield;
You shall not come between me and the light.

As, at the last, my brother you shall be,
We shall go on together till the end.
Though you may strike, and, striking, see me fall,
Though you escape me for a certain space,
I shall arise and overtake your feet,
For at the last my brother you shall be.

All men are greater than the deeds they do.
My love is greater than your utmost hate.
Though each may struggle in his separate cause,
Though we be blind to understand the fray,
We shall achieve our brotherhood at last,
For men are greater than the deeds men do.

AUTUMNAL

By Madison Cawein

GONE are the flowers; the song birds are departed;
And through the tuneless bushes, cold as death,
The Autumn breathes her melancholy breath;
And with the year my joy lies broken-hearted.

This is the wood where oft with her I wandered;
This is the thicket's happy place, where through
Love's supplicating ardor, flame and dew,
Unfettered passed, and on her beauty pondered.

She has departed and the sun is setting.
There winds the road, so like a serpent cold,
That lured her love away, with power of old,
To other scenes—to strangers and—forgetting.

Soon will her ship, swift plunging, breast the spray,
Trouble the ocean into billowy caves;
But, having passed, the sea will smooth its waves,
And roll indifferent on its ancient way.

From yonder tree a blackbird flies; and yet
A little while the bough its feet have pressed
Shakes with its flight and then returns to rest—
So will *she* cease her sorrow and—forget.



VIRTUE—A theory, not a condition.



WIFE—One who always believes the worst.



NO man knows himself—not even a self-made man.

"REVERE HER SILVERN HEAD!"

By Albert Payson Terhune

Take good care of Mother, boy, when I'm
dead and gone.
Be kind to her and keep her from all pain.
Revere her silvern head,
For after she is dead
You will never know a mother's love agayne!

THE inspired if raucous songstress ended her ditty—ended it to a veritable salvo of applause. It was the first flash of enthusiasm the evening's dreary cabaret program had struck from the flinty souls of the auditors.

To Raegen's cabaret restaurant, as the hours grew later and then all at once earlier, folk of the off-Broadway underworld, demi-underworld and cheaper theatrical realms had drifted. By midnight the place was quite full. By one it was scarce emptier.

Turkey trotting was still in its New York infancy. And paid performers alone murdered Terpsichore in Raegen's place. The dancing was interspersed by songs from ladies with fluffy clothes and fluffier voices.

The guests that evening merely sat and ate and drank—chiefly drank—and stonily witnessed the slaughter of grace and melody.

Not until a woman with an umbrella cover skirt and pousse café h'r stepped into the center space and rasped out the "Mother" song did the first handclap resound.

But the floodgates were open. Everyone clapped, shouted or stamped. The prima donna smirked modestly and repeated the song's chorus.

One rat-faced man at a table near me frankly allowed the tears to flow down the sharp bridge of his nose. I had seen him before. The preceding week. In

the Night Court—whither meddlesome neighbors had caused him to be dragged. They declared he had disturbed their sleep once too often by beating the aged mother who was his sole support and who, it appeared, had stingily refused to give him the rent money as a love gift for one Gladys Herera of vaudeville fame.

Others in the restaurant who looked as though they might lead similar primitive home lives were crying happily or dabbing their noses. It was a touching scene. I said so to Raegen, who had loafed across to my table.

"Yes," he assented; "I told her to wheeze that one. The crowd was getting petrified, and there'd likely have been a fight pretty soon to cheer things up. I had to do something to clear the air. And 'Mother' is always a winner."

"'Mother' is the universal password," I philosophized brilliantly.

"That's right," agreed Raegen. "It gets them all. It gets the worst first. And, son, I've wasted a whole lot of time wondering what's the answer."

"Motherhood's a holy function," I suggested, with the full courage of my platitudes.

"It sure is," nodded Raegen, "a holy function that women share with rabbits and pigs and other flora and fauna and critters. A human mother'll starve and steal and fight for her babies—sometimes. An animal mother will starve and steal and fight for her babies—always. That's the main difference so far as a lowbrow like me can see from where I sit."

I tried to set him right in a few well chosen words. But before I could think of an argument to refute him—in fact, I am still trying to think of it—he was

rumbling on in true Raegan-esque bent, deaf to any voice save his own.

"It's one of the nine million puzzles of the Big Puzzle Game, to me," he said, "and it hasn't got any pat answer. When a woman's awkward and ugly and at her worst in looks, folks nudge each other and make side-splitting jokes about her. And that's the time I always want to put a dent into their grinning jaws for 'em. For she's just about as funny then as a man on his way to a cancer hospital. If there's sacredness in danger, she's sure sacred at that time.

"But after the battle is all over and won, and she's scrambled up to safety out of the Shadow House, then everybody tacks a halo on her head and calls her holy. And a lot of wall-eyed gooks, who'd be half-witted if they had sense enough, strain their pipes applauding songs about her.

"It's past me. Why a woman should be sacred just because she is a mother—and why a cow shouldn't be—is one of the great guess-agains. But it's so, and you'll never hear anyone even hint that a mother is mortal flesh and that she could have one redeeming fault. It's always been like that and it's always going to be. For folks get their ideas of life from the things they read. And no author dares write about a mother without making her out a moon-faced angel. And if he did it'd be no use. Because no editor'd have the brains or the nerve to print the alarming news that mothers are only human. No better, no worse than other humans. Gee, I could jabber about that for years if someone would bring my meals in.

"Yes. There's mothers. And mothers. And then again there's mothers. I don't remember my own. From all I hear of her I don't miss much. But Maisie Wells was a mother. So was Mrs. Gryce. You remember Maisie, I guess. You wouldn't remember Mrs. Gryce. For she was a saint on earth, and besides, she never went out of her home. Mighty few people ever got into her home, either. And those that did always felt better and whiter and happier for a week afterward. As if someone had given

them seven dollars and a new fancy vest. You know the feeling."

I was graceless enough to be more interested in Maisie Wells, whom I vaguely remembered, than in the saintly Mrs. Gryce of whom I had never before heard. So I angled tactfully for the motherly experiences of Maisie Wells.

Maisie (began Raegan) was all right. Except what happened to her. But that sure was a plenty. She was any age you like. The kind of woman that time stands still for; like the sun did for Joshua, some years back. She'd got married when she was sixteen. Her husband did her just one good turn in all their years of married life. That was when he went to sleep, one hot night, in the window frame of their sixth floor flat.

He woke up—somewhere or other. Most likely. On the sidewalk they found samples of what was left of him. And that was all he left Maisie, by the way. That and a two-months-old kid. It was up to Maisie to make a living for the kid. She wouldn't send her to an institution. And sweatshop wages won't keep a baby the way Maisie decided she was going to keep hers. So Maisie took the only job that pays the amateur gilt-edged wages from the start.

She was a looker. Why, that girl would have made Venus look like the woman who comes in Tuesdays to wash the windows. And she had sense. She never had to serve in the ranks.

So the baby had all the frills and the fussy, pretty things that women like to string onto their young. And afterward it was a case of convent school, and all that, for the little girl.

The kid had no idea how her mother made hers. Neither did the convent people. Maisie was a born money getter, and money saver, too. And she was wise enough to travel with a crowd that were crawling with yellowbacks. One of 'em was a Wall Street guy who put her next to a stock that he said was good to buy on a five-point margin. Maisie sold on the same margin, instead. And she paroled her winnings by coppering another such tip from a

big-hearted Wall Street admirer who had a sense of humor.

That gave her enough to let her put up the shutters and go out of trade. And the kid was just graduating from school. So Maisie framed up a life for them in a little jerry-built cottage out Pompton way. Just they two; with June roses and a honeysuckle vine and maybe a collie and a gray kitten. And her wonderful kid daughter all to herself. A silly ambition for a winner, with Maisie's looks and sense. But any ambition is all to the good so long as it is an ambition. And that was Maisie's.

She was one of the few Rahabettes that gets—and hangs onto—enough to retire on. I saw her kid once. A smug, slack-faced bunch of bone-headedness, I doped her up. But Maisie thought she was grand. And Kiddie snubbed her and proofread her English and spent her money and made her perfectly happy.

A newspaper man named Thack'ray got a book printed once that I read part of. I read it because it was cribbed, name and all, from a moving picture play I'd seen. And one line in the book always reminded me of Maisie and her kid. The line runs something like—

"Oh, it is pitiful, the bootless love of women for children in Vanity Fair!"

Maisie's daughter met a chap who come of good family and traveled in a good crowd; even if he was shy on cash. And he got engaged to the girl. She loved him as dearly as he loved himself—pretty near. Then he found out about Maisie's way of keeping Friend Daughter alive when she'd been little. And he told the girl.

Girlie goes up in the air and tells Maisie what she thinks of her, and says she'll never forgive her and never soil her innocent mouth by speaking to her wicked mother again.

And the fellow said unless the girl could mislay Maisie for keeps the match was off.

All of which put it right up to Maisie. She always was good in emergencies. This time she thought quick, and right to the point. She wound up her accounts and settled all her estate on her daughter. All of it but fare—one way—

to Boston on the Fall River boat. She tried to kiss the girl good-bye. But Daughter shrunk away from her, real pure.

Then Maisie took the night boat to Boston and never got there.

There wasn't much inquiry made. It was accidental drowning. Unknown woman. Respectably dressed. No marks to identify. Good for two sticks on an inside page.

And the man generously forgave Daughter for her mother's past and married her. They travel in a good crowd up there. On Maisie's money. For hubby hasn't a gift for finance. They've got only one skeleton in the kitchenette; the story of a vile woman who had cruelly kept Daughter from being raised in a foundling asylum or by the Gerry Society; and then got out before she could do any more harm. When they have family rows now, I hear, hubby still playfully throws up that old story at his loving wife.

But mostly he's just as ashamed of Maisie's memory as his wife is. And no one else up there knows. So Maisie got her wish, after all, you see. Her daughter's well off and happily and respectably settled in life; with no smear on her name.

Wasn't that worth the Morgue and the Potter's field for the unidentified woman whose body was fished up off the coast somewhere? There aren't a lot of us who get our life ambitions gratified so complete. But Maisie always did play in great luck. Like I told you.

Then—now that I've got the stoopid Maisie Wells part of the story off my chest—there was Mrs. Gryce. Say, that woman was a mother with a capital "M" and quiggly illuminated type. She had a daughter, too. Most mothers have, I've noticed. Unless they happen to have sons or something like that.

Lord, but it does me good to remember Mrs. Gryce! It's like a spring-water drink—after Maisie. But there's several points alike in their histories, at that.

Get out your mother ideals and your saint recollections and then your "Unspotted by the World" chromo and your

"Rock Me to Sleep" song. Mix 'em together and give 'em a slender, girlish old figure in black and a crown of silver hair that's a pledge of the gold one to follow. Then think up a little withered face that has a kind of glow from looking into the Life Sunset. Add to that the gentlest, calmest eyes and the softest voice you ever heard. And you'll know something what Mrs. Gryce was like—if ever you happen to have seen her.

Which you didn't. I wouldn't have, either; only, she used to do charity sewing for the settlement children when I was working over there. And I used to be sent up to the flat to give her some batches of hard luck stories and gratitude.

She was a widow. Her husband had lived such a good life that he left just enough to let his widow starve in comfort. She had one daughter, Myrtle. As pretty as they make 'em. And clever and good. And a worker.

That girl saw she had to help. She sold her opal ring and the gold beads for a three months' course at a pothook-and-hanger foundry. At the end of that time she could twirl the shorthand pencil like a dream and do typewriter solos as fast and as accurate as Paderewski can purr that buzzy "Flying Dutchman" spinning spiel.

Myrtle got a job with Apstein & Co., where her father had been sales manager. She was so quick and well educated that the boss—Isidore Apstein himself, no less—fired his private secretary (whom I'm flattering a lot when I say she looked as if there'd been a misplaced romance between a crocodile and a seagoing walrus) and gave pretty little Myrtle the position. He was dreadful kind to Myrtle, too, was Apstein. You remember him, maybe. He was mostly tonneau; and built more for endurance than speed. It sure was a noble thing for a rich man like him to take such an interest in a young and inexperienced demi-orphan like Myrtle Gryce.

He made her office work as light as a feather for her and gave her dandy presents. And he used to go calling, afternoons, on her mother; just because old Gryce had once been an employee of his.

Mrs. Gryce received Apstein as if she'd been an empress and his mother, combined. It made a hit with him. And he got in the habit of dropping in on the little old lady every week or so on his way home from the office; for a half-hour's chat. Mostly about Myrtle.

His own wife was too busy climbing, hand over hand, up toward Sassiety's frigid zone to be much of a companion to him. And it used to do him good and make him feel all made over to wind up the day by a pleasant gabfest beside the grate fire with the gentle little old lady. She reminded him of his own mother. She reminded every man of his own mother, bless her!

Well, you know how folks gas in an office. They're kept too busy to think about their own affairs. So they got to thinking about other people's. Pretty soon all the office staff of Apstein & Co. was whispering about Myrtle Gryce's cinch job, and how Apstein looked at her when he thought no one was noticing. They all liked Myrtle. And they said it was a slimy shame and that someone ought to speak to her. One or two of 'em tried to hint. But she was too clean and too green to understand. Then one of the girls who had met her mother took a chance on going up to the flat and trying to warn Mrs. Gryce about her daughter!

I knew the girl who went there. But I never knew the details of the talk she had with Myrtle's mother. For the girl would never tell me or anyone else. But she came away with her eyes all shiny, and said she'd as soon tell a baby there was no Santa Claus as to smash that sweet-faced old saint's faith in human nature—or even in Apstein nature. And that, anyway, a girl with a mother like hers couldn't go far crooked. Providence wouldn't allow it. For Mother's sake.

Young Bingham, who was Apstein & Co.'s sales manager—and who was going into business for himself as soon as his contract with Apstein was up—used to hang around Myrtle's desk all the time; when she first went to work there. He'd met her before; while her father was alive. And he used to call on her, too. He was a straight, hard-working chap, with a future.

He'd 'a' made a fine husband for Myrtle. But Apstein didn't see it that way.

First, Apstein managed to make simple old Mrs. Gryce believe that Bingham was a choice blend of Don Juan and the man who keeps the poor distillery employees working overtime. And Mrs. Gryce was so afraid the wicked young fellow might make a hit with Myrtle that she very gently and timidly let him see he wasn't welcome at the flat. It most killed her to do it. It was the first unkind thing in all of her simple old sheltered life. But she *had* to do it for Myrtle's sake. It was a case of mother love turning a rabbit into a lion.

So Bingham gets canned. And Apstein has the run of the place. Which wasn't the very best thing for anybody concerned. Not that Apstein meant any more harm than a full-grown rattlesnake.

By and by, even Myrtle begins to worry. She asks mamma if it mightn't be better not to let Mr. Apstein take her so much to the theater and call so often and send her so many presents. He being a married man and maybe a husband, too. And when Myrtle asks this, her mother, for once in her sixty years, gets almost angry.

"Why, Myrtle!" she says, all indignant, "I never heard of anything so ungrateful! Mr. Apstein has no children of his own. And he feels toward you just as if you were his own dear little daughter. He told me so himself. His home life isn't happy, either. He says so. His wife doesn't understand him. And my heart aches for him. It must be terrible to have an unhappy home life. It's the least we can do to help make up to him for that, as far as we can; when he's been so kind. It would hurt him terribly if you refused his nice gifts and wouldn't go driving with him and to the theater and all that. It means so much to him. He told me that, too."

"Besides, I can't give you the pleasures a lively, pretty girl ought to have. It makes me happier than I can tell that you can get them from a man who admired your father so and who thinks of himself as a sort of father to you. Not

many girls have such a man to take their own father's place. Now be my sensible baby and get ready. He'll be here in ten minutes."

Can you beat it? No, says you with a patient smile, you can't. Nor even can you tie it. It's a bear. Here's that poor, trustful, unworldly, mentally purblind mother just innocently pushing her fatherless girl into the grip of the slimiest cur unhung. It's all over but the shouting.

At the office it got so bad they stopped talking about it. That's always the last stage. Then, because Bingham still hangs around Myrtle's desk, Apstein makes an excuse to break what's left of their contract, and packs him off.

That leaves the field free in the office as well as at home. And Apstein don't see any good reason for delaying matters any longer. So pretty soon he plans a yacht trip to Bermuda and asks Myrtle and mamma along, and then arranges so as mamma's taxi will drive to the wrong pier and the poor old dame will be left behind. He even plants the fake wireless that's to tell Myrtle how mamma will join them at Charleston.

It was all well laid out, and it called for plenty of small change, too. But Apstein's long on dough and still longer on little morganatic jaunts like this.

So it's planned without a hitch. I ought to know. I was to get a slice of green and yellow paper for working the wireless end of it.

And Mrs. Gryce is as pleased as punch at the idea of the wonderful sea trip she's going to have. And she turns her black silk dress and buys three yards of ruching and sends her best mourning veil to the cleaner's.

She's even gladder for Myrtle than for herself. For lately Myrtle's been getting quiet and white and kind of abstracted. And the outing will do her good.

Like hell it will!

The office crowd—so the girl down there that knows me says—figures out that by this time Myrtle begins to understand what she's up against and she can't see any way out. Which, as she's a good girl, is naturally calculated to make her some thoughtful.

The morning before the trip is to begin the fat goes spang into the fire.

Apstein and Myrtle are in the inner office, going over some last few business details that Apstein is winding up before he starts on his nice vacation; when in walks young Bingham.

Bingham had just got his new business well started and was coining about fifty a week out of it; with good prospects of more, if he kept on hustling. Which he would. Being of the hustling breed.

He gets past the boy at the door and walks careless across to Apstein and picks him up by the collar, without a word, and trundles him into the big outer office where all the staff are. And there, with not a speck of anger or haste, and still keeping mum, he proceeds to give Apstein the licking of his glad, speckled career.

Not even the office toady tries to stop him or to run for a cop. Because Bingham doesn't look as if it'd be healthy for anyone to butt in just then.

Bingham keeps on licking Apstein until he's tired. Till Bingham's tired—not Apstein. Apstein gets tired long before Bingham does.

Then Bingham leaves Myrtle's good kind fatherly employer all spraddled out, loose and squealing, over a desk. And he tucks Myrtle's arm in his own and off they pike to the nearest dominie and get married.

Bingham had bought the license early that morning. With the consent of the governed and in her company.

Yes, Myrtle had been wise from almost the start. She'd just stuck around and put Apstein off by one feat of innocence after another, until Bingham was settled in his new business and able to marry. Then they'd gone ahead with their fifth act program. They'd been engaged for pretty near a year. She'd kept her mouth shut and waited. It had been the only play to make.

Some girls seem to have more brains than a pet crow.

And poor little Mrs. Gryce—wasn't she grateful, though, when she found what Myrtle had escaped? You bet she was. As humbly grateful as I was the time the post office people pinched me just when I'd got my correspondence gold mine fairly under way.

You see, Apstein had promised the dear trustful old soul a bonus of five thousand dollars when the Bermuda voyage should start—without her. And he'd promised her an allowance of a hundred a week for the rest of her days—or until he got tired of Myrtle.

He was a generous man, was Apstein. And good to the old. Like the Talmud says to be.

Myrtle's wayward, undutiful marriage 'most broke her mother's simple heart. 'Specially when Bingham wouldn't let ma live with 'em after Myrtle told him about a sweet twilight chat she'd overheard between aforesaid sainted mother and Apstein.

"Yes," finished Raegan, "it's hard to dope 'em up. As I think I mentioned—there's mothers. And mothers. And then again there's mothers. And I'm so ivory-brained I can't see much difference between mothers and other humans. But everyone else can."

A round of applause interrupted him. By universal request, the songbird with the umbrella cover skirt and the fur-trimmed voice had been induced to grant an encore on her former triumph.

And even as we listened she repeated the soulful refrain:

"Revere her silvern head,
For after she is dead
You will never know a mother's love agayne!"

The rat-faced man, for the fourth time that night, wept in blissful hysteria.



LOVERS' eyes—magnifying glasses; husbands' eyes—a microscope.

HIPPOLYTE'S BRAKE*

By Brieux

HIPPOLYTE MARCHAND was a pensioned employee of the Western Railroad, a man who, late in life, had been taken with a mania for inventions. For more than ten years he sought a brake for railroads and carriages.

The idea for this brake took birth in Hippolyte one day on the top of an omnibus.

"Just think," said he one night to his wife, "how the horses tire themselves out in starting up after each stop. And they have to use equal force in stopping the vehicle. It's simply a matter of finding out how to use, at each start, the force stored up by the preceding stop. Imagine a spring that will coil when you work a recuperator brake and which will turn the wheels when released by pressing on the starting lever."

And Hippolyte would enumerate the many advantages which were sure to result from the adoption of his brake: the relieving of the strain upon the horses; a saving of the vehicles by preventing jarring; even a saving of the pavement. He usually added by way of conclusion:

"And, besides, you wouldn't have to run after an omnibus for five minutes just because the coachman pitied his horses."

From buses Hippolyte had extended the idea of his brake to railroads and to all motors whose action is intermittent.

He resolved to make some trials on models first, and for this purpose he bought toy buses, and miniature carriages and carts. All day long, at his little house at Neuilly, he stayed in the

attic which he called his "atelier," and it was a pathetic sight to see this serious little old man taking apart and putting together the wheels of these toys, patient, absorbed, breathing heavily as if undergoing great physical exertion, when, in reality, he held between his thumb and forefinger an axle which was no larger than a darning needle.

His wife never interfered with him. They had a little income and Hippolyte's expenses were very small. Since their marriage Madame Marchand had always been the master of the house. When Hippolyte was employed, he brought home his month's wages intact, and his wife gave him ten francs a week "to be the dandy on."

She had brought him a little dowry, which had been increased by a few modest inheritances. Their daughter had grown up without any illnesses and was married to a rugmaker at Lille.

These two old people lived alone, happy in their retirement; he seeking the realization of his dream; she treating her husband like a big child and heaping upon him the treasures of an affection which, though maternal, had in it something of authority and jealousy.

She was glad to have him absorbed in his invention because now he needed her more often, and she took charge of him as if he had been a child, and spun round him a network of little kindnesses. She governed him absolutely, dressing him after her own taste, feeding him according to her own ideas and scolding him if he disobeyed her. She saved by weeks of good management money which she gave him to use in buying from the locksmith the little pieces of metal

* Authorized translation by Willard Huntington Wright.

required for his never-ending experiments.

She begrudged him nothing, and, in speaking of him, called him her "big baby" with a shy and infinite tenderness.

Never had she been so completely happy. She adored her husband with an unusual affection: he was to her the entire world. In growing old together, in that contentment which grows out of a middle class existence, free from all petty cares, they had come to resemble each other, to think the same thoughts, to understand each other in silence.

Each day she went up to the "atelier" and watched him at his work of hammering little nails no longer than half a pin, screwing on nuts that she could not see without her spectacles. Silent she was, with never a smile or a question, content to see him thus occupied at a work she knew would last forever.

She felt a calm and enveloping joy in being the strength which sustained his weakness. One day Hippolyte wished to give his advice concerning some small thing about the house.

"Come, now," she said to him, "go and take care of your recuperator brake, you child, and let me take care of you."

In a word, she protected him, and therein took a great and tender pride. Sundays she made him put on a frock coat, a vest and black trousers. In one of his pockets—always the same one—he found 104 sous: two sous for the blind man at the corner, two sous for snuff, which he brought back to her, and a hundred sous to "be the dandy on." To "be the dandy" was to play billiards and piquet and to pay for the absinthe of the locksmith who, without this mark of friendship, would have long since refused to execute Hippolyte's many and exacting orders.

But one Sunday he unluckily talked politics. The locksmith and Hippolyte insulted each other irreparably, and, when the next day the old man showed himself at the locksmith's, he was told that there would be no more work done for those who exploited the "people."

This was a great blow to Hippolyte. During the dinner he did not speak, and sighed audibly at every spoonful of soup. That night, on the pillow, there was a long conversation between the old man in his cotton nightcap and the old lady in her frilled white bonnet with the black velvet ribbons. He opened his heart to her and told her his troubles; she consoled him by kind words; and the murmur of their voices lasted until the early hours of the morning.

"The only remedy," said Hippolyte, "would be to install a little forge in my atelier. But we would have to have a hole made in the roof to let the pipe pass out. And this would cost a great deal."

"Yes, my big child."

Hippolyte got his forge. But, as soon as the work on it had been begun, his wife put only one lump of sugar in her own coffee, took no more snuff, and made numerous little sacrifices which were really unnecessary, but in which she found a sweet pleasure. She watched it with loving eyes, and reveled in her deprivations.

Thus weeks, months and years passed happily by.

But Hippolyte's brake was destined to disturb this serenity and to ruin this happiness.

For some time the inventor, who now had begun to study geometry, mechanics and formulas for calculating the resistance of materials, took long and mysterious trips to Paris of which he revealed nothing to his wife.

One day he left in the early morning, having put on his black Sunday clothes. He did not come home at the lunch hour, but arrived in a carriage thirty minutes late.

The old woman began to scold him. He stopped her short in a voice which she had never heard him use before:

"Never mind—never mind. Business kept me in Paris."

"And who's going to pay for the carriage?"

"I'm going to keep it."

"By the hour?"

"Yes; I'm going out after we're finished."

"You're crazy."

"Not at all. Probably this evening I'll bring you back some fine news."

He went out after having eaten in great haste. During the meal she had told him that he ate too fast, and when she wanted to take his fork away in order to let him catch his breath, he answered rather harshly, saying that he hadn't time for such "monkey business."

When he had gone the old woman wept.

At four o'clock a messenger brought her a letter. Tremblingly she opened it. The unusual events of the morning had worked her up to such a pitch that she had to read it several times before she could get the sense of it. It read:

MY DEAR WIFE:

At last the recuperator brake is found. Mr. X—, the great promoter, has put 3,000 francs at my disposal for some few more studies I have to make. He is coming to dine with us this evening. I have ordered a meal from the caterer in the Avenue Neuilly. Don't bother about anything. Only make yourself as beautiful as possible and bring out the silver-ware.

Enclosed you will find 100 francs to pay the caterer.

YOUR HUSBAND.

She thought he had suddenly gone crazy. But where could he have got this hundred-franc note which he had sent her?

The truth was that Hippolyte had really made a useful discovery, one which promised a large income. By accident he had met a promoter who understood him, and one who, after a few just criticisms, had offered to pay him something down on the patent, the profits on which they were to divide.

The little old woman had no alternative but to believe her husband when she saw him arrive that evening in a private carriage in company with a man decorated with the riband of the Legion of Honor, who wore a huge fur overcoat, and saluted Madame Marchand ceremoniously with a "pleased to have the honor of being presented to the wife of a great inventor" whom he hopes soon to call his friend.

Madame Marchand wondered if she were dreaming. She saw her husband

talk with an ease and self-confidence which she had never known him to have. He seemed to take the compliments of this man as something due him, and she wondered if this were really Hippolyte who sat before her. She looked at him curiously as if she had just seen him for the first time, and she discovered in the corner of his mouth a little wrinkle which she had never noticed before.

Her surprise was so great—this unexpected event had brought so much newness into her life, into her habits of judging, of understanding; it brought about such a complete alteration of the opinion that she had formed of her husband—that she was unhappy before this realized dream, in the face of this certain success.

At table the gentleman spoke of the decoration which Mr. Hippolyte Marchand could not help but receive very soon. Hippolyte decorated! Wouldn't this mean the end of all?

She spoke very little, absorbed as she was by a world of thoughts. That night when the promoter had gone, Hippolyte went up to his studio full of large tables which held drawings, diagrams and large sheets of paper pasted upon boards—sheets upon which circles, points and spirals were crossed mysteriously with red and blue lines.

"It's time to go to bed," she said.

"Not yet; I have to work."

And with a large lamp in his hand he clambered up the stairs.

She was on the point of arguing with him as she used to do, and of saying, "Come, my big baby," but she felt that this man who was going to be decorated was no longer the one whom she had so long protected, taken care of, fondled. He stopped. "Bring me up some very strong black coffee."

"Coffee at night? Do you want to make yourself sick?"

"Certainly not. Please bring it." And he continued to go up, his white beard vividly illuminated by the strong light which came from under the lamp-shade.

She stayed there for some time, then obeyed him and went to bed—alone.

This was the first time in nearly forty years.

The next morning he insisted that she put two lumps of sugar in her coffee. She tried to resist, but he made her do it. Were they not rich now?

She held the second lump of sugar suspended for several seconds over her steaming cup, and when she let it drop it hurt her in the pit of the stomach. Hippolyte brought her back a silver snuffbox full of fresh snuff, but she did not want to touch it.

The inventor was too absorbed to notice her sadness, which became greater and greater at each little act which made her realize that her husband was slipping away from her.

Had he not ordered a suit of clothes without consulting her about it?

She was worried at Hippolyte's success, like a mother who from day to day sees her little child turn into a man, and who no longer knows what to do with her tenderness. Two or three times he spoke to her as if he were her protector, and his tone wounded her, although she did not understand why.

One night he left her alone at the dinner table; and, as she sat there, her elbows on the table, her eyes fixed, carrying to her mouth a piece of pear which she had forgotten to eat, she started at hearing him call her from the top of the stairway.

She went up.

Hippolyte was crazy with joy. He showed her a drawing he had just finished.

"There," said he, "is the recuperator brake!" And as he rolled up the paper he added: "You see that? That's worth a million!"

She let herself drift on the tide of his dreams. They left their little house at Neuilly and went to live in Paris so as to be near to the office of the promoter, who had taken him as an associate. In the evening he went often to the theater, to dinners, to banquets. Without doubt, he would soon be presented to the Minister and, naturally, he had to be seen in society.

He talked and talked without noticing

the tears in his wife's eyes. When he saw them he merely asked:

"You are crying?"

"Yes; we'll never be happy again."

"And why not?"

Hippolyte tapped her on the cheek with a little air of superiority.

He did not sleep. The strange attitude of his wife made him think, and he began to see the truth. As he became drowsy he suddenly realized that there was no one at his side. He sat up with a start.

He was seized with an apprehension. He put on his dressing gown and his old slippers and went softly up to his studio. He was not mistaken. A ray of light came from under the door. He listened and heard sighs and sobs. Without making any noise he went in.

The unhappy old woman, in her blouse and petticoat, her white hair escaping from underneath her nightcap, was weeping as though her heart would break, with sharp, quick sobs like those of a child. They began with a huh-huh-huhhuh and ended with a wail, incessant, monotonous and despairing. Her mouth was twisted with pain. She suffered so much that she did not think to dry her eyes. Her tears fell like great drops of rain on her thin breasts.

She was sitting in front of the drawing that he had shown her, and the sight of it exaggerated her sorrow. A tear had fallen on the paper, and she brushed it away softly, in order not to spoil this thing which was the source of all her grief, but which she nevertheless respected.

Hippolyte tried to console her, but could not. In vain he reasoned with her, but she could not stop crying. Finally, after an hour and a half, she dried her eyes. Her whole body was trembling and her teeth were chattering. With great effort Hippolyte persuaded her to leave the studio and go back to bed.

Next day it was necessary to call in a doctor for her, and she died after eighteen days of fever and delirium, during which time the only words she could say were:

"My big baby! My big boy!"

Hippolyte did not leave her for an instant. When she breathed her last he thought she was sleeping, and it was only when the nurse came to give her some medicine that he knew she was dead.

He lost interest in everything. He gave back his three thousand francs to the broker who pursued him relentlessly, and it was a month before he went up to his studio again. He became more and more feeble, and soon his

daughter, now a widow, had to leave Lille and come to live with him. In the hope that she could give him back a little of his old life, she made him go up to his attic. He seemed to interest himself anew, but it was only to drag about sadly those toys which had served him for his first studies.

One day his daughter found him loading a little cart with pieces of paper. They were the fragments of his torn drawings.



A DEAD ONE

By Witter Bynner

GOD, but my feet are sore!—
And the men all hurry by.
I used to pick up one or more
On any street I'd try. . . .

I'm down and out, I am—
A dead one, that's my name.
And you don't need a diagram
For a grave hole for this dame.

But I'll take my finish quick,
And I'll take my whiskey neat . . .
Well, I don't care. The whiskey's thick,
And it'll ease my feet.

Let's see: Which one was first?
I think his name was Clem. . . .
Two others caught me like a thirst—
I can't remember them.

And that's the way it goes;
Something has snapped inside.
Those three! When I'm forgetting those,
I guess my soul has died . . .

"It's not too late," they say;
"Jesus can make me whole."
He had the chance. But He wouldn't pay
Five dollars for my soul.

POST-IMPRESSIONS OF CITIES

By Amelia Hatteras

NEW YORK—Cleopatra doing settlement work . . . the Twentieth Century Express running amuck . . . the turkey trot in Tammany Hall . . . *nymphomania* . . . Thais in the cloak and suit business.

PHILADELPHIA—A village in long trousers . . . embroidered mottoes . . . Rogers groups . . . a cross between Fifth Avenue and Henry Van Dyke . . . Peeping Tom blindfolded.

BOSTON—A lecture by Peary on the North Pole . . . spectacles on the minor prophets . . . Brioux, Elbert Hubbard, "the social evil" . . . Christian Science, Gaby Deslys and eugenics discussed by clothing store dummies . . . "Sweet Adeline" played on a parlor organ.

CINCINNATI—Valkyries drinking flat beer . . . dachshunds and *sauerbraten* . . . Jaeger underwear.

NEW ORLEANS—A creole Carmen serving shrimp gumbo under magnolia trees . . . a decadent poet dancing on the levee . . . music, moonlight and miscegenation.

CHICAGO—A six-foot freshman in need of a hazing . . . a *demi-vierge* smoking her first cigarette . . . a shilling shocker without a shock.

BALTIMORE—"Dixie" with variations performed by fifty negroes on the jewsharp . . . steamed crabs and chicken *à la* Maryland . . . phoenixes, foot scrapers and Colonial house fronts . . . diamond-studded heels and lace stockings coming out of a cathedral.

PROVIDENCE—Candles sputtering in the rain . . . an unkempt millhand in a deserted dance hall . . . imitation jewelry.

LOS ANGELES—Literary prophylaxis . . . Anthony Comstock removing the seven veils from Salome . . . odorless disinfectants and vacuum cleaners.

RICHMOND—A little middle-aged (female) member of the Southern aristocracy rushing about on a motorcycle . . . a shrinking violet pretending to be an orchid.

SAN FRANCISCO—White slavers, Japanese farmers, houris and real estate agents opening California claret in a private dining room . . . tourists from the East . . . *dolce far* from everything.

OLD POINT COMFORT—Bathing in milk and being rubbed down with velvet . . . strained honey and unrestrained honeymoons . . . souvenir postal cards . . . early to bed . . . late breakfasts.

GRINDSTONES

By James Huneker

Yet each man kills the thing he loves,
By each let this be heard;
Some do it with a bitter look,
Some with a flattering word,
The coward does it with a kiss,
The brave man with a sword.

OSCAR WILDE.

IT was nearly nine o'clock in the evening when the young ladies entered the fashionable boarding house drawing room. Madame Recamier's, on the upper West Side, was large enough to defy the heated spell; yet the group seemed languid on this tepid night in June, fluttered fans and were not disposed to chatter. No one had called. Miss Anstruther, a brilliant brunette, cried out:

"Oh, a kingdom for a man!" Mild laughter was heard. The girl went to the grand piano and said: "What shall it be?"

"No Chopin," exclaimed Miss Beeslay.

"Do play a Chopin nocturne. Why, it's the very night for nocturnes. There's thunder in the air," protested Miss Pickett.

"Listen to Anne. Isn't she poetic to-night—" By this time the young women were quite animated. Tea served, Madame Recamier sent down word by the black page to ask Miss Anstruther for a little music. The dark girl pouted, yawned and finally began the nocturne in F minor. Before she had played two bars the doorbell rang, and its echoes were not stilled before a silvery gong sounded somewhere in the rear. The drawing room was instantly deserted.

Presently the page brought in two young men, both in evening dress.

"We should like to see Miss Anstruther and Miss Pickett," said the delicate-

looking fellow. "Say that Mr. Harold and a friend are here." The page departed. Mr. Harold and his companion paced the long apartment in a curious mood.

"Teal They don't drink tea, do they?" asked the other man, a tall blond, who wore his hair like a pianist.

"I'm afraid that's all we'll get, Alfred; that is, unless Madame Recamier comes downstairs or else is magnetized by your playing. She keeps a mighty particular boarding house."

"For God's sake, Ned, don't ask me to touch a piano. I've come with you because you've raved about this dark girl and her playing. There they are!"

Two came in; introductions followed, and soon the conversation became lively.

"We drink tea," said Anne Pickett, "because Madame Recamier believes it is good for the complexion."

"You have a hygiene like a young misses' school, haven't you?" said Ned, while Harold, fascinated by the rather gloomy beauty of Miss Anstruther, watched closely and encouraged her talk. She had a square jaw; her cheek bones were prominent. She was not pretty. The charm of her face—it was more compelling than charming—lay in her eyes and mouth. Brown, with a hazel nuance, the eyes emitted a light like a cat's in the dark. Her mouth was a contradiction of the jaw. The lips were full and indicated a rich, generous nature, but the mask was one for a Madonna—a Madonna who had forsaken heaven for earth. Harold found her extremely interesting.

"Of course you are musical?" he asked.

"Yes; I studied at Stuttgart, and have

regretted it all my life. I can never get rid of the technical stiffness."

"Play for me," he begged. But playing was not to the girl's disposition. Sultry was the night, and a few faint flashes of heat lightning near the horizon told of a storm to come. Anne Pickett was laughing very loudly at her companion's remarks and did not appear to notice the pair. Several times, at the other end of the long drawing room, eyes peeped in, and once the black page put his head in the door and coughed discreetly.

It seemed a dull time at Madame Recamier's.

Suddenly Harold placed his hand on Miss Anstruther's and said, "Come to the piano," and, like one hypnotized, she went with him. He lifted the fallboard, put back the lid, glanced carelessly at the maker's name and fixed the seat for the young woman. Anne Pickett was watching him from the other side of the room.

"Who's your friend? He acts like a piano man. There were three here last night."

"H'sh!" said Ned, as the pianist struck a firm chord in C sharp minor and then raced through the Fantaisie Impromptu. The man beside her listened and watched rather cynically as her strong fingers unlaced the involved figures of the music. That he knew the work was evident. When she had finished he congratulated her on her touch, observing: "What a pity you don't cultivate your rhythms!" She started.

"You are a musician, then?" Before he could answer, the page came in and whispered in her ear: "Madame Recamier wants to know if the gentlemen will have some wine."

Miss Anstruther blushed, got up from the piano and walked toward the window. Harold followed her, and Miss Pickett called out: "Ned, we can have some champagne; old Mumsey says so."

When Harold reached the girl she was leaning out of the window regarding the western sky. Darkness was swallowing up the soft few summer stars: he put his hand on her shoulder, for she was weeping, silently, hopelessly.

"How can you stand it?" he mur-

mured, and the ring in his voice caused the girl to turn about and face him, her eyes blurred but full of resentment.

"Don't pity me—don't pity me; whatever you feel, don't pity me," she said in a low, choked voice.

"My dear Miss Anstruther, let me understand you. I admire you, but I don't see why I should pity you." Harold was puzzled.

"Anne, he doesn't know; Harold doesn't know," cried Miss Anstruther, and Anne laughed, when a sharp flash of lightning almost caused the page to drop the tray with the bottles and glasses.

It grew very hot; the wine was nicely iced, so the four young people drank and were greatly refreshed. Madame Recamier was justly proud of her cellar. Anne pledged Ned, and Harold touched glasses with Miss Anstruther, while the first thunder boomed in the windows, and the other boarders out in the back conservatory shivered and thirsted.

Harold went to the piano. He felt wrought up in a singular manner. The electricity in the atmosphere, the spell of the dark woman's sad eyes, her harsh reproof and her undoubted musical temperament acted on him like a whiplash. He called the page and rambled over the keyboard. Miss Anstruther sat near the pianist. Soon the vague modulations resolved into a definite shape, and the march from the fantasia in F minor was heard. It took form, it leaped into rhythmical life, and when the rolling *arpeggi* were reached, a crash over the house caused Miss Pickett to scream, and then the page entered with a tray.

Harold stopped playing. Miss Anstruther, her low, broad brow dark with resentment, said something to the boy, who showed his gums and grinned. "It's de wine, missy," he said, and went out on ostentatious tiptoe. The group in the conservatory watched the drama in the drawing room with unrelaxed interest, though little Miss Belt declared the thunder made her so nervous that she was going to bed. Madame Recamier rang the gong twice, and a few minutes later there was a smell of cooking from the area kitchen. Harold started from the beginning. The storm without mod-

ulated clamorously in the distance, and orange-colored lightning played in at the window as he reached the big theme in the bass. It was that wonderful melody in F minor which Beethoven might have been proud to own, and was followed by the exquisite bunch of double notes, so fragrant, so tender, so uplifting, that Anne Pickett forgot her wine; and the other girl, her eyes blazing, her cheekbones etched against the skin, sat and knotted her fingers and followed with dazed attention the dance of the atoms in her brain. She saw Harold watching her as she went to school; Harold peeping in at the lodge of the convent; Harold waiting to waylay her when she left her father's house, and she saw Harold that terrible night! He had reached the meditation in B and her pulses slackened. After the crash of the storm, after the breathless rush of octaves, Miss Anstruther felt a stillness that did not often come into her life. The other pair were sitting very close, and the storm was growling a *diminuendo* in the east. Already a pungent and refreshing smell of earth that had been rained upon floated into the apartment, and Harold, his eyes fixed on hers, was rushing away with her soul on the broad torrent of Chopin's magic music. She was enthralled, she was hurt; her heart stuck against her ribs and it pained her to breathe. When the last harplike figure had flattened her to the very wall, she sank back in her chair and closed her eyes.

"Ho, Margery, wake up; your wine's getting warm!" cried lively Anne Pickett as she sipped her glass, and Ned rang the bell for the page. Harold sat self-absorbed, his hands resting on the ivory keys. He divined that he had won the soul of the woman who sat near him, and he wondered. He looked at her face, a strong face, and in repose with a few hard lines about the eyes and mouth. He gazed so earnestly that she opened her eyes, and catching his regard, blushed—blushed ever so lightly. But he saw it and wondered again. More wine came, but Miss Anstruther refused and so did Harold. By this time the other pair were jolly. Ned called out:

"Harold, play something lively. Wake up the bones, old man! Your girl isn't getting gay." Harold looked at her, and she walked slowly toward the conservatory. Miss Pickett, crazy Anne, as they called her, went to the piano and dashed into a lively galop. Ned drank another glass of wine and began to dance from the end of the room to the piano.

"Come on, let's have a good racket!" he yelled, as the piano rattled off in ragtime while Miss Anstruther and Harold sat on near the conservatory. The whispering grew back of them, but the girl did not hear it. The music unlocked her heart, and her commonplace surroundings faded. If she had but met a man like this that other time! She realized his innate purity, his nobility of nature. Little wonder that his playing aroused her, made live anew the old pantomime of her life. She unconsciously placed in the foreground of her history the figure of the man beside her, yet she had never before seen him. It was wonderful, this spiritual rebirth. Only that morning she told the girls at breakfast she could never love again—she hated men and their ways. "They are animals, the best of them!" and Madame Recamier laughed the loudest.

Harold left her, took another glass of wine, and seeing Miss Pickett light a cigarette, asked permission to do the same.

"Can't I bring you another glass of wine?" Harold asked tenderly. The gang of girls in the conservatory nudged each other and stared with burning eyes at Miss Anstruther through the lattice. She gently shook her head, and again he saw her blush. She did not stir. He began the luscious nocturne in B—the Tuberose Nocturne, and Madame Recamier's gong sounded. The page entered and said:

"No more piano playing tonight. Madame wants to go to sleep."

Miss Anstruther started so angrily that there was a titter behind the lattice. But she did not notice it; her whole soul was bent on watching Harold. He spoke to Ned, and Miss Pickett's jarring laugh was heard.

Then he went over to her, and

sitting down by her, leaned over and touched her face with his finger. The girl grew white as she felt her heart. At the next word, the old, tired, hard look came back, and she faced him as she had first received him.

Then suddenly the laughter behind the lattice grew noisy. Anne Pickett screamed out:

"Another of Margery's dreams shattered!"

Ned laughed and rang for more wine.

As they came down the steps the next morning Harold said to Ned:

"My boy, there are worse crimes than murdering a woman."

"Oh, let's get a cocktail," answered Ned.



PORTRAIT D'UNE FEMME

By Ezra Pound

YOUR mind and you are our Sargasso Sea,
 London has swept about you this score years
 And bright ships left you this or that in fee:
 Ideas, old gossip, oddments of all things,
 Strange spars of knowledge and dimmed wares of price.
 Great minds have sought you—lacking someone else.
 You have been second always. Tragical?
 No. You preferred it to the usual thing:
 One dull man, dulling and uxorious,
 One average mind—with one thought less, each year.
 Oh, you are patient, I have seen you sit
 Hours, where something might have floated up.
 And now you pay one. Yes, you richly pay.
 You are a person of some interest; one comes to you
 And takes strange gain away:
 Trophies fished up; some curious suggestion;
 Fact that leads nowhere; and a tale for two,
 Pregnant with mandrakes, or with something else
 That might prove useful and yet never proves,
 That never fits a corner or shows use,
 Or finds its hour upon the loom of days:
 The tarnished, gaudy, wonderful old work;
 Idols and ambergris and rare inlays,
 These are your riches, your great store; and yet
 For all this sea hoard of deciduous things,
 Strange woods half sodden, and new brighter stuff:
 In the slow float of differing light and deep,
 No! there is nothing! In the whole and all,
 Nothing that's quite your own.
 Yet this is you.

MADONNA OF THE FIREFLIES

By Eden Phillpotts

AIR had fallen in love with earth, and though all was silvery and the clouded sky under wide passages of gray that broke to pearl, yet it seemed that the gold of past sunshine lingered interwoven as a permanent possession and glory of mountain and vale. The far-flung traceries of vine and olive confessed it, and the spire of the cypress and the land beneath her vernal robes. Vegetation draped rather than clothed this earth. The emerald and jade spread no heavy vesture over plain and hill, but transparently covered them, as though in these homes and haunts of southern sunlight no snug pelt was needed to keep the brown earth warm.

Spring danced through Tuscany, and where her twinkling footfall passed the bud broke and the flower bloomed. Here was radiant green of vine, pear and apple, peach and almond; while darker foliage of plum and fig spattered the golden verdure and, darker yet, seen far off, reigned the cypress, splashing earth with its solitary notes of exclamation, now dotted singly, now clustering about some lifted campanile or marking invisible boundaries between land and land. Ringed in with mountains, that fell broadly to their foothills, lapped in milky air, its din silenced, its detail hidden, there spread a city leveled like a low island of corals and bright lavas in the midst of a dim green sea. It broke out of the verdant plain; and by the russet and amber of it, by the mellow tincture kneaded into every roof, by its mighty dome and that silver stalk beside it where bells nod, by the lesser domes and turrets and by the tower of towers, that breaks like a brown flower from a brown sheath, one marked

Firenze, queen and enchantress of the olden time.

John Travers gazed upon this scene from a tiny piazza five miles distant and his troubled face grew softer. He lifted it to the blue-robed Apennines, then turned to gaze at a *podere* a mile away. The place rose perched on its proper knap, like a thousand others. Under old terra cotta tiles, whose warmth was bleached away by a century of sunshine, and fretted with orange and ebony lichens, the white walls stood. No cypress crowned this hill, but a great loquat massed against the wall of the dwelling, a hayrick, reduced to a mere wedge of gold about its stake, flashed sunbright beside the farm, and beneath, subtending the homestead, there rolled out familiar cultivation. Hay was being saved, and pale ribbons of fallen grass spread shining between the rows of vine and fruit trees.

Hither went the watcher presently. It was his home for a season. Life had crossed the man's hopes and derided his ambitions of late, had put to him harsh questions, only to be answered after intervals of dismay and doubt. For here was one who had dictated to fate and turned his back on fortune. With full hands she came to him, and he had sent her with full hands away, weighing above her obvious gifts of peace and plenty one little, doubtful, personal possession born with him—a glimmer from a remote ancestral flame.

The son of a prosperous physician, John Travers might have followed in the safe footsteps trampled by his father, and with no more than fair measure of steady work and application have succeeded to the parental name and re-

noun. Nor in his earlier youth did it occur to him to question a career so obviously indicated. As a matter of course, John Travers, the elder, assumed that his son—a man of good presence and fine ability—would carry on his own work, succeed to his practice and pursue his original field of inquiry, which was the eye; indeed, the lad for long years accepted the situation as expedient in every aspect, and not until he had been at a hospital for nearly five years, filled the position of "indresser" and begun to read for his "finals," awakened the doubts that waxed into ultimate denial.

He had always drawn with accuracy, and his father, no draughtsman, was wont to impress on the lad how valuable this gift must prove; but the instinct grew with use; the studies in anatomy became less and less a means and more of an end; some subtle seed of art, that had not perished but only slept through certain generations, now found a congenial temperament, or modeled it; and at twenty-five years of age, John Travers, the younger, knew that he must be a painter. Life for him meant art, not science; the spirit awoke and cried to him that he must indeed use his own eyes that the sight of other men might be improved, but not as his father had done before him. He was called into the world to make beautiful things from his own sense of beauty; and now he had been striving to do so for six years and the goal was far distant still. He followed the uphill path of the painter of ideas. No conventional road lured him; he answered to his own vision; but as yet it was not perfected, and he stood upon the bleak plateau lands of doubt, where difficulties crowd the horizon like mountain peaks and the climber, chilled and wearied by his last effort, finds each point gained but the vantage ground that shows a loftier one.

To Firenze he had come smarting and wounded, for his year's work and his masterpiece had been rejected by the Royal Academy—a trial unforeseen after three years of acceptance. And for a moment art tasted bitter to his palate; the kinship of friends in the city was

vain; their enthusiasm and undying hope appeared but folly.

He walked amid figures of the mind, that beckoned and promised much; and others that also beckoned and promised nothing. Like Lucian before him, he dreamed and saw two women, and doubted between them, while his heart beat low and hope went hungry. The one was thin, worn, labor-stained, with deep lines on her face and a great wistfulness in her wonderful eyes. Gaunt she was and her hands were made ugly by eternal labor; her garment was earth-colored and ragged, so that it hardly served to hide her lean bosom and thin arms. But the other minced in her going and was round and very fair. Her garment owned neither stain nor tatter; she went sleekly in purple and fine linen and she moved with smiles confidently, daintily, ingratiatingly, as one forever welcome, from whom no lover of beauty could turn away. Art was the first woman and Culture was the second; and Travers remembered how Lucian, with a cynical indifference, had flouted the spirit for the substance, disowned the creator and thrown in his lot as jurist and literary trifler with her who promised the fruits and the joys of earth.

But Art had won this man forever and there was no turning back for him. Though the loaf that she offered was lean and her flask of wine but thin, they held that nourishment of the soul no other food could promise him.

He had turned his back on Firenze and, sequestered and removed from sight and sound of his fellow laborers, at a little *podere* in Bagni di Ripoli, Travers returned by sure stages to himself, while his unconquerable ideal, dimmed for a while, now in the dreaming vales of Arno, trembled out again, daily to grow brighter and steadier. His purposes were assured, his mind affirmed, and patience visited him as a welcome guest.

Life at the *podere*, unutterably fine in its stern simplicity, was well qualified to help the painter. Here generation after generation of one race labored upon land that they could never own. Yet it sustained them, and they lived and toiled in contentment and family friendship.

There were twelve men, women and children, all knit together in relationships, and with them lived one old man, who had known another world than this and come by accident of fallen fortunes to home at Ripoli with a dead wife's kindred. They made room for him without question, recognized his superior birth and education, lifted him to a place above themselves and loved him for his tribulations and his bravery. Now he also worked with his hands and earned his few daily centimes; but in the fields he could not labor, therefore he did lesser tasks about the home, for he was a good carpenter and house painter; he had made the *podere* very fair with green shutters and drawn beneath the deep eaves a frescoed pattern of purple grapes upon a golden lattice. These were his holiday tasks and he spent his pennies on the colors that went to make them; but at other times he mended the picks and ploughs, repaired the hedges, pruned the vines and used his needle upon the clothes of the men.

Amedio Brogi was the head of the family—a grandfather whose wife was dead. Then came Giacomo, his eldest son, with a living wife and two children, and Luigi, his second son, a bachelor. Giacomo's eldest boy, Gustavo, was wedded to his cousin, Emilia, and their offspring had brought beauty into the Brogi race—a quality until her advent lacking.

But Bice was fairer than a lap of spring flowers—all woman at sixteen, with innocent brown eyes that made the heart of man glad, a small red mouth, and fair hair that still dwelt in twin plaited tails upon her back, though Emilia declared that it should be lifted to its proper crown.

Concerning the rest of the family, Travers as yet knew little. It took time to appreciate the clan and master the relationships, but for the present friends were Amedio, the grandfather, Gustavo, Emilia's husband and Bice's father, and Bice herself. For she was that loveliest of artist's dreams, an Italian girl at once beautiful and fair. "My skin is the color of the filbert nuts when the sun just touches them; and my hair is the

color of the ripe maize and my eyes are the color of the wine of Orvieto," explained Bice to the artist, when he talked about painting her. The last simile he declined to accept. "No," he said, "your eyes are more beautiful than wine; they are the color of the autumn woods when the leaves change to amber."

Bice was betrothed to Carlo Brogi, a distant cousin, who dwelt with the clan; but here was a dark and difficult matter, for Carlo—now twenty years of age, a skilled vine dresser and a man of gentle disposition and good character—was not strong. He suffered, and there were days that followed on sleepless nights when Carlo could do no work. Sometimes he coughed; sometimes his strength seemed to leave him and his heart beat too fast. Then he could only sit in the sun and plait straw, like a girl. His folk whispered the grave word "consumption" among themselves and were very tender to Carlo; but a local physician, who had seen him, uttered no definite pronouncement, though he shook his head and declined to give any hopeful promise. He bade Carlo be stirring, eat well, take much olive oil and work in the air when he could do so.

Lastly of the friends of John Travers was Virgilio Torrigiani, the old kinsman of the clan, who loved beautiful things. His very name bespoke some culture and there was extraordinary dignity about his bent figure. Ugliness triumphed in him and achieved the lovable and picturesque. He had a great nose and a bulldog mouth, large gray eyes that never lacked puzzlement and wonder for all his fourscore years, and a head as bald as head could be. He had lost all his money by going surety for a friend who betrayed him; and he had lost his wife, Amedio Brogi's sister, and three daughters, who had all died in youth. And now he himself stood on the verge, very busy, uncomplaining, childlike, full of stories and full of interest in the life of his wife's people. He had found her a serving woman in a friend's family and fallen in love with her and married her. Visitors from England and America knew Virgilio. He could speak English, and was fond of bringing from an under

recess in his garments a Christmas card sent to him three years earlier by a British lady of high degree.

"I mended her traveling bag with a silver clasp," he said. "And she was by birth honorable, though she scorned to claim the fact. You can see her name written by herself upon this card of Christmas memory. It was to show that, while moving amidst honorable people like herself, she still could remember Virgilio Torrigiani and his silver clasp."

Among these peace lovers, to a home where not one harsh word was ever heard or a voice lifted in anger, into a sunlit habitation of human souls as poor and contented as the lizards on their threshing floors, had come John Travers; and little by little his larger interests faded, his deeper cares died. The trivial concerns and fleeting hopes and fears of the Brogi gathered weight for him; politics was narrowed to their affairs; ambition descended upon the promise of the vines; and, for excitement, was the plan of a fresco on the side of the barn; for intrigue, certain matters hatched in secret with Virgilio concerning the welfare of Carlo Brogi and his sweetheart.

II

At first Travers had felt a sort of contempt for these people. Smarting and writhing under the heavy hand of chance, he scorned a folk who could "take life lying down," as he phrased it; but presently he began to accept the point of view and to perceive not only the limitations but also the compensation of an existence represented by the temporal return of four centimes a day. The Brogi farmed the *podere* for its owner and received roughly one-half of the profits that accrued from all sources. It was a prosperous enterprise and averaged a return of from five to seven and even eight per cent upon the outlay. But not all the family was content to take no hand in their own fate. Bice had a will, and the artist, whose Italian sufficed for the purpose, presently found that, added to beauty, the girl possessed character. It expressed itself naturally in

the terms of her religion, and an intellect, bright enough, found in superstition a food that chimed with her ambitions and her hopes. She had an active mind, as opposed to the passive instincts of her kindred; it was not enough that the saints should smile upon her dreams and help her to be good; she looked to them to help her to be happy also.

Dark as a cave opened the mouth of a lower chamber upon a little piazza before the dwelling house of the Brogi, and from within there issued the sweet savor of cattle. Four beasts dwelt there—milch cows which Bice attended. They never grazed, for their food was served to them daily; but Bice took them for a walk sometimes after the evening milking, that they might stretch their legs and take pleasure in the fresh air at sunset time. Then best the artist liked to talk with her, because the spirit of rest and contemplation haunted that hour, and when Carlo did not walk beside his sweetheart, Travers would sometimes do so and mark her moods, now gay, now sad. She uttered surprising things sometimes and dumbly felt the poetry of life flashing through her young brain.

"It is because my lover is not strong," she explained. "If he was like me—hard and tough and always ready to work, and hungry and knowing no pain—then I should never think of the sad, strange things I do, but just be like other girls, full of the joy of being a girl and having a lover. But it makes you old and wise very quickly if there is doubt. It brings curious thoughts into your mind. The thoughts are not themselves funny, but it is funny that I, Bice, should think them. For instance, I wondered last night in my bed what had become of all the smiles of all the beautiful, dead women that have ever lived. A smile frightens away the ugliness of the ugliest people. A girl's face is never ugly when it is smiling. But the smiles of a pretty girl are like the cornflowers and poppies in the corn: you cannot see them without smiling back."

"The smiles of the fair, dead women have all warmed somebody's hearts in their time perhaps."

"It is not enough. What becomes of them? There are things that are too beautiful for God to let them die. I tell you smiles are treasured up, as we treasure up the grapes, and when we lovely girls die and go to heaven, our smiles are given back to us again—they are all there waiting for us."

So would the girl chatter beside the kine, and presently, with growing intimacy, she began to give the painter a larger glimpse of the secrets of her heart. Returning one day to his midday meal, which he ate with the family, who were now accustomed to his presence, Travers found Bice dragging a haycart, as though she had been a pony. Her sleeves were pulled up and her feet were naked. He helped her with this burden up the hill. A path wound here steeply, flanked by whispering wheat, whose glaucous blue made harmony with the olives above it; and halfway up the track was a shrine of ripe, red brick, faced with crumbling mortar. The niche held a little marble Virgin and child, and behind them dabs of russet and rose, faded and fallen from the mouldering plaster, told of a perished fresco there. Above was a penthouse of sun-dried tiles, and in the niche stood a green bowl that held a bouquet of wild flowers—blue sage, the gladiolus of the corn, nigella and sweet, sad-colored broom rapes. A vine clambered up the little sanctuary and presently amber bunches of fruit would cluster there.

"Your patron saint, Bice—I am always wishing that you would tell me about her. There are fresh flowers for her every day and the place where you kneel has no grass left upon it."

Bice rested and wiped her forehead with her blue skirt. She looked at the speaker and nodded.

"I may tell you," she said. "I cannot tell you all there is to tell at one moment; but in pieces, perhaps. She is my saint, and sometimes I think she is going to be strong, and sometimes I doubt about it. I am not very sure of her yet. Time will tell. I am being very good to her. I look at her with four eyes every day, and I pray to her with two hearts. A girl cannot do more than

that. Sometimes I call her Madonna delle Lucciole and sometimes Madonna delle Lucertole. Because certainly the lizards love her. I have seen them lift up their paws and pray to her."

Travers nodded gravely.

"The good St. Francis taught them to do that. You remember how he wanted all the world to know the best thing he had ever heard, and how he talked to the birds and fishes and told them about Christ? So the fireflies and the lizards no doubt heard, too."

She doubted it not.

"The fireflies love their place best in the whole *podere*. They much like the irises, that make so great a brightness under the trees when they are in flower, and they love the olives, and signal backward and forward and wave their little lamps to each other; but they burn brightest at the shrine; and I have seen them light up the face of Mary Madonna till it shone. And I think, because she is so tiny, that they understand her and she talks to them. And I kneel sometimes and hope they will come to me from her and tell me something—something about Carlo."

"Perhaps it will happen."

"One has to be patient with the saints and the Blessed Mother. They take their own time. But she will give me a sign presently."

"I believe Carlo is going to be strong again, Bice."

"It must be one way or the other soon. We want to marry, but if he is to die before long, we must not."

"I don't think he is going to die."

"It is not what you think, or what I hope. It is what will happen," she said. "And nothing ever happens till it has happened. Corn is not bread till it has gone into the oven. So I pray a great deal here—far oftener than anybody knows; and I am a very good girl in other ways—exceedingly good."

"I know you are. It is a most deserving case, Bice, and if the Madonna of the Fireflies does not take some trouble about it soon, I shall feel very much surprised."

"It is certainly her turn now—one must give and take, I suppose, even if

one is the Mother of Christ," said Bice.

"The saints themselves get nothing for nothing in this weary world," he admitted.

"Why should they?" she asked. "We Brogi say it is not honest to take without giving. But there are plenty of people in Italy who think it great cleverness to do that."

"And everywhere else," he assured her.

They went on presently and entered the house place, where a mighty chimney yawned over an open hearth and the food was spread for the workers. Amedio Brogi and Virgilio Torrigiani sat in the places of honor—snug chairs on either side of the fire, lifted above the floor—while Giacomo took the head of the table and Luigi the foot. Emilia, Giacomo's daughter-in-law, stirred a great red copper pot upon the charcoal fire and presently served broth of beans and fennel. Then followed black bread, with oil and some red wine. And that was all. They ate much bread, but butter they did not know, nor tea, nor coffee. Water, and wine made on the *podere*, was all their drink, and of meat they took but little; yet they celebrated delicate feasts sometimes at the season of fruits, and Travers had already tasted Alpine strawberries and curds of ewe's milk—a dish that no gourmet might scorn.

So the stranger lived among the people and found his heart go out to them at last, so that peace returned to him. And she came not empty-handed, for as his wounded spirit healed and disappointments faded behind this foreground of beauty and human content, the normal desire to create awoke, and he girt up his loins and answered the voice that called.

III

ROUND about the old shrine the flowering vines were hung on little maple trees, that lifted them above the corn, and a strip of soft sward, newly shorn, passed behind the ancient holy place. This accident led to an inspiration, and John Travers, returning in the crepuscule

through the dusk of the olives silently, marked Bice at her orisons. She knelt upright with her hands together, and it happened that above her head the fireflies twinkled. So absorbed was she that his footfall passed unheeded and he stood a while marking her profile fitfully outlined as the golden green lights spangled the darkness behind it. A magic picture came and went in the wavering illumination, and Bice remained visible even when the living lights quivered away to each other's flashing amid the far trees and above the wheat. For during these June nights there was no darkness, only a tender, ineffable gray and blue mingled. The sun loved teeming earth too well to leave her long and, after midnight, the aura above his secret way could be seen, where he dallied a little behind the Apennines before returning.

Travers waited motionless until the girl was done; then, when she rose, he appeared and declared his purpose.

"I must paint you in this beautiful, dim light—just your head against the smoke color of the olives in the dark," he said. "But there shall be the glimmer of one firefly behind your hair throwing up a little halo, and perhaps two or three other fireflies—one far off and one passing by in front of you. I see a beautiful picture if I am clever enough to paint it; and I shall call you '*La Madonna delle Lucciole*.'"

"It would be better to paint the saint herself. I gave her a bunch of tassel hyacinths today; but yesterday a bad thing happened. The rose I put there had a green beetle hid in the midst of it, and all the heart of the rose was eaten out by the greedy beetle. It was a stupid thing to happen and Madonna will be vexed. I should have seen the beetle."

As they went up through the glimmering orchards, Bice expounded the folklore by which she unconsciously guided many of her actions, while the listener made pretense to listen and learn as he studied the outlines of her head, long neck and straight back. She was so fresh and virginal. For a moment he contemplated an "Annunciation," painting it

as none had painted it yet—a night piece with a moony spirit on silver wings bending before the Virgin, where she wandered under the tender and transparent gloom of olives. But he returned to the earlier vision—the girl's head lit by the little living fires.

She was busy the next day, and he sat beside her and offered his help while she shelled a dish of peas for market. The delicate green of them in a red copper bowl beside Bice's dark blue dress made fragrant color, and he, in good humor, told her so. But she was pensive and full of a great matter. He tuned himself therefore and begged to learn what had befallen her.

"I have had a dream," she said, "a deep dream, and it was a happy dream, but it was also very difficult."

"Dreams never come true, they say in my country."

"Dreams are sent," she answered, "and it is silly of your country to say that they never come true. Dreams are sent to help us and to warn us, and to save us sometimes. They do come true. This dream was sent to save Carlo. I am perhaps wrong to say that it was a dream at all. It may have happened."

"Tell me about it, Bice."

Her thumb ceased not from tumbling the peas into the pan, while she talked to him, so that little pops of the splitting peascods punctuated the wonders of her dream.

"It was the middle of the night, signor, when I woke suddenly to hear a tiny tapping and a tiny voice talking to me. 'Lift me up, Bice,' said the little voice, and I looked down upon the floor and saw my white Madonna delle Lucciole standing there! She had come all the way from her shrine to me; but she had left the *bambino* there and her arms were empty. And in each hand she carried a firefly, as a man or woman might hold a candle, and the flies understood that they were to light the Madonna to me through the darkness of the sleeping house. I lowered down my open hand to the ground and the wee Lady rested her foot upon it, so that I lifted her up gently to the coverlet; and she set her

fireflies on my knee and sat down near my shoulder and talked to me.

"Of Carlo she talked, and it was thus: 'Bice Brogi,' said the Madonna, 'I am come to tell thee how thy betrothed shall win health and strength again and be strong of his hands and thy joyful husband and the father of thy children;' and I said: 'Blessed Mother of Christ, I knew it was possible to thee; and I am sorry for the green beetle in the rose.' She held up her little hand, because, you see, she had come to talk to me and didn't want me to talk to her. Then she went on again in a voice like the 'glu-glu' of the nightingale. 'Bice, there is a crucifix in the first shop over the Ponte Vecchia—an old, old crucifix. It is in the window beside a gold and crystal snuffbox and a piece of old lace.' And that nearly made me jump out of bed with wonder, because I have longed and longed for that crucifix since I was a little girl. It has been in the window for three years. It is black silver, curiously carved and fretted, and though very small, so wonderful that you see the drops of blood on the hands and feet and side. And at the head and foot and upon each arm is a round bead of red coral, most beautiful to see. I interrupted the Madonna again, because I was so excited.

"'Blessed Mother,' I said, 'I have wanted the crucifix for long years, and I have talked with all my might to that old toad of a man in the shop and tried to make him say forty lire, though I haven't got them if he did; but year after year he tells me sixty lire, for too well he knows that I want the crucifix.'

"Then the little Lady spoke again. 'You must win it for Carlo, because it is life and health for Carlo to have that precious thing. It belonged to a saint, and if your lover but holds it to his breast each night and prays to the suffering Lord with faith, his sickness will pass from him and he will be whole again. But single-handed and by your own strength and through your own fortune unaided must you win the price of it. None shall help you; none can help you but me.' It is true that I am a very businesslike girl, signor—even old Vir-

gilio Torrigiani has said that. Now I blessed the little Virgin again and asked her if she would help me and put it into the heart of the old toad of a man to take less; but she did not seem to be interested in that. It was too small a thing for her holy mind. 'Remember!' she said. 'Carlo must have the crucifix, and you alone can get it for him. None must help you. Now lift me down, for the dawn is making ready and I must go.' I did as the Lady bade me, and she tripped away, with the fireflies flying in front of her to light the darkness. I heard her little feet tapping on the stone floor and then everything was silent again. And when the morning came, I woke up all one puzzle. Because I have to do this great thing alone."

A tame white chicken came close to Bice and she held out some green peas for the bird to peck out of her hand.

"It was a beautiful dream, and of course it has got to come true, Bice. Don't you think I might help?"

"No, no, no," she declared vehemently. "If that had been possible, I should not have told you, because it would have been begging. None can help me, and if anybody gave me a single lira of the price, the crucifix would be useless to Carlo."

"How much have you saved?"

Bice shrugged her shoulders.

"I have got no money in the world," she said. "My last lira went to buy a pipe for my grandfather on his birthday."

"And the crucifix is sixty lire?"

She nodded.

"I do not think the Madonna delle Lucciole will trouble to make the old toad man's heart softer."

"Then the grand thing is to know how you are going to earn the money. Well, I see a very easy way out of the fix."

"Impossible, signor."

"You sit to me for my picture, and I'll pay you sixty lire for the sittings."

"No, that is charity. I know an old man at Firenze. He is a friend of Virgilio's. He has a white beard like flax, and brown eyes, that he can lift to heaven so that you would think he saw God's throne and the angels round it. It

is his great art to look like a saint, and he is run after in the studios and does very well. He makes three lire a day, and he is a fine man and can be turned into fine pictures, and has the art to keep as still as a sleeping cat for hours. But I cannot earn sixty centimes that way. It would not be honest, and the crucifix would not work."

"You're a purist, Bice. But think twice. How can you do what the Madonna wants you to do if you raise objections of this sort? If you're worth sixty lire to me as a model, there's an end of it."

She shook her head.

"A thing is only worth what you have to pay to get it," she told him. "I would sit to you for nothing."

"But suppose I sell the picture of you for a thousand lire?"

"That is your affair, and I should not suppose anything so silly. I only tell you this dream because it is so beautiful and interesting. The Madonna would not have bade me do it if there was no way to do it. I trust her. There will come a way. Only I must be better than ever, and do good things and think good thoughts and tempt her with all my strength to come and talk to me again."

She rose and picked up the bowl of peas; while Travers, as interested as a child in the story, considered the problem and could see no immediate solution. He allowed Bice's affairs to take possession of his mind to the exclusion of his own.

The drift and drizzle of time in this haunt of amity and frugal peace had come between him and the realities and problems of his own life. He was conscious of it and happy that it should be so. When he picked up reality again it should be with a strong grasp. For the moment here was other reality and the problem of a girl's happiness.

He sought Virgilio Torrigiani and talked with him. Roses, white and red, climbed a trellis on the western face of the farmhouse; but the woodwork had failed here and there, so that Virgilio was called to mend it. A new lattice had been erected, and now the ancient

man gave it a coat of paint before placing it in position.

"May I talk to you, Virgilio? Here's a puzzle that Bice Brogi has set me. She is a brave and honest girl with faith enough to move mountains."

"Her dream?"

"Yes. Now we must fix the way out for her."

Virgilio set down his brush and nodded. To him the subject possessed infinite charm. But he put his finger to his lip.

"Not here—the walls listen, and there are windows behind the rose trees. Sometimes, too, I think that the cows overhear one and tell people things, for secrets are hard to keep if a man is poor. The poor have no privacy. But I am going to the valley presently to mend a plough. The metal tongue is worn out, and we have a new one that I screw to the wooden share for Luigi. Then we will talk."

"You'll find a way—such a wise and clever man as you are."

"I am wise," admitted Virgilio, patting his forehead, "but I am not clever. If I were clever, I should not be painting this lattice and living with the Brogi."

They met by the plough and the old man asked a question.

"Is it not true that you have considered Carlo and think he may get better?"

"Yes; I was a doctor once—or very nearly. I have thought a great deal about Carlo. He is a typical case of anæmia, and I have got a chemist in Firenze to make him some very special physic. It's a food rather than a physic."

"He is very much better for it already."

"Much. He will be absolutely well and hearty in six months. In fact, I've found out what is the matter with him, Virgilio; but the point is that neither he nor Bice will ever believe that he can be cured now without the crucifix. It is vital that he should have it. There is a thing called faith healing and, if you give it another name, science will recognize it and admit its significance. I'm doing wonders with Carlo. The

truth is that he has nothing radically the matter. He is tall and has grown too fast. I am fattening him and getting blood into him. But, given the crucifix, my task is lightened and we hasten the cure. Of course what we have to do is to put sixty lire into Bice's pocket—in such a way that she will consider it has fallen honestly and properly to her, either as a result of work, or good fortune. But she's so punctilious that I don't see any way."

Virgilio regarded the painter with mild astonishment.

"Do you not? There are a great many ways, really. We are a subtle people and quick in such things. Yes, there are plenty of ways—if you will pay the money. For instance, Enrico Cardoso is dying. He will be dead and in his grave in two—three weeks. He has known the Brogi and cared for them. He might leave Bice sixty, or even a hundred lire under his will. It would be surprising but not beyond possibility."

"A stroke of genius, Virgilio! Could you manage it?"

"Yes, but it is clumsy. There is a better way. This little Madonna in the shrine. Why should not she find the money?"

Old Torrigiani winked and then laughed. His amusement brought tears to his eyes and he wiped them away. Travers broke a black Tuscan cigar in half and they smoked it together.

"How on earth can the little puppet find sixty lire? She's not worth a franc herself," he said.

"Come and look at her," answered the other. "I'm glad you approached me with this matter, for it takes an Italian to outwit an Italian. You would never have been too clever for Bice. But I shall show you how easy it will be to hoodwink her and give her the desire of her heart."

They went to the shrine, where Bice's last offering of flowers flagged a little in a blaze of afternoon sunshine. A great jar of asphodel she had set there, with a spike or two of Mary's thistle—the plant upon whose leaf fell milk from the Virgin Mother's breast to stain it

with ivory whiteness evermore. Virgilio elaborated a plan and the painter listened and applauded.

"Do it not too swiftly, else she may suspect," he said, "but wait until the next *festa* and then let the thing happen. Carlo will be getting still stronger by that time, and his eye brighter, and his power to pull and carry greater. And meanwhile you shall hurry to old Giacomo Rossi, the man of the antique shop, and buy the crucifix yourself for fear of accidents. But explain to him that when Bice Brogi comes to pay for it she may take it away."

IV

BICE was not self-conscious, and since the painter wished it, she did not mind him making sketches of her at her prayers. He studied her in the morning sometimes, when the low sun burned through the vines and set great dew-drops glittering upon every green thing; but best he liked to see her when twilight sucked the form and color out of the orchards and the filigrane of foliage was gone. Then only dim masses, amorphous and vast, marked the roll of the land, where it spread darkling to the starry skies of summer nights, while a cool breath moved through the glades and amid the trees like a presence and the fireflies trickled their little lamps through the network of the flowering olives.

On such a night came Bice to her shrine and, unknown to her, John Travers kept watch, for the plot was afoot and the trap set. He had, at the inspiration of Virgilio, purchased an ancient vessel of bronze—hard and sharp-edged—and when the girl was safely out of the way, with his old friend's aid, Travers carefully buried the curio where Bice's knees had worn away the grass before her shrine. Then in the dry dust was the old vase hidden, so that the edge of it must salute the suppliant's touch when next she knelt. The thing was worth two hundred lire, and it seemed to Virgilio and the painter that by no possibility could Bice deny her little Lady's direct interposition,

for had not her own patient knees worn down the earth until the vase proclaimed its presence?

"It is a gift from the Madonna to her, and she must accept it as the reward of prayer," explained Virgilio. His old eyes blinked innocently as he spoke; but his mouth twitched.

And now the bronze lip of the vase bit gently on Bice's rounded knee, and she, thinking it a stone, bent to dislodge it. But the obstacle would not be moved, and presently she began scraping away the soil with her brown hands. She felt the rim of the vase now and talked aloud to herself.

"What is it? What is this under the earth?" she said.

Stones had been thrust in with the vase to make the disposal of it seem more natural, and now, impatient, Bice hurt her hand and uttered a little cry, whereon Travers, as though by chance, came past on his way to the house and asked her what she was doing. She explained, and soon between them they unearthed the treasure. Then the girl flew homeward, to learn what she had found, while John hastened beside her a little way and warned her not to be too sanguine that the metal was of any worth. She had fallen straightway into the snare; she assured him that the treasure must be precious; she accepted it as a gift from the saint.

"I know, I feel how it is," she said. "The good little white Madonna's heart has gone out to me and Carlo. This heavy thing will go to Rossi, and he will give me the crucifix in exchange for it. Miracles can still be made to happen, if a girl has faith."

Then she outsped him, and when Travers arrived he found Bice in the midst of her family, with Amedeo Brogi holding the treasure in his hands and Giacomo, Gustavo, Emilia and the rest in conclave about the elder. Only old Virgilio Torrigiani sat in his chimney corner apart and showed no enthusiastic interest.

"I love not croaking," he said, "but it is wise not to count too much upon promises. Things do not keep their promises any more than men do. We

must not taste the wine at sight of the flower buds."

Invited to give an opinion, Travers was equally cautious.

"It may be worth plenty of money—hundreds of lire, for all I can tell," he said. "On the other hand, you may not find anybody to buy it. Of course I would buy it, at any price you liked to ask; but I know you won't let me. Still it must be worth something, for it is very old surely. If it doesn't fetch sixty lire, it might at least fetch thirty."

But Bice scorned their prudence.

"You know nothing at all," she said. "It is a miracle, an there's an end of it. The vase was not there yesterday; and it was there today, and Madonna knows to a soldo the value of it. And if you are so dull that you do not feel in your heads what will happen tomorrow, I will tell you what will happen. It is this. The old toad-faced Rossi at the shop will claw the vase and tap it and shrug his shoulders and sigh and say it is a great sacrifice; and then he will give me the crucifix and keep the vase. That is going to happen tomorrow."

They were silent before her assurance; and when the family rose next day with the sun, to go about their business before breakfast, Bice had already set out for Firenze with her vase.

Descending to the orchard, Travers marked that she had set fresh flowers on the shrine before starting. A mauve spike of Dalmatian iris and a white rose and a red rose were laid at the foot of the image.

And an hour later the radiant Bice returned with her crucifix and fifty lire.

Rossi, with a sudden, rare generosity, had been content to make no more than a hundred per cent on the exchange.

"There is no doubt that my marriage with Carlo is in sight," declared Bice, "for now that the crucifix sent to me by the Madonna of the Fireflies shall lie on his breast every night, he will grow stronger and stronger, so fast that he

will soon do a man's work again. And I shall keep the money for our wedding. And where the vase was hidden in the earth is most holy evermore, so I shall plant a loquat seed there, and it will spring up and grow faster than common trees, and bear fruit in five years and make good money for my children."

The fate of the loquat tree John Travers never learned; though it is certain that before he left Bagni di Ripoli Carlo was nearly restored to health. But neither the artist's physics nor his council had much to do with the cure in the opinion of the Brogi. They doubted little that Bice had saved her lover from an early grave, and to the black and silver crucifix with the coral beads they gave the praise. Only Virgilio understood; but he never contradicted the clan.

"You must let me know when the wedding happens," John said to Bice, during the last sitting that she gave him; "for I will send you both a wedding present."

She promised to tell him.

"You have been already far too good to us; but you are yourself happier and fatter than when you came, and happiness and fatness are great gifts," she said, "because they keep out care and cold, which are the saddest things in the world. So we have done something."

"Not to mention your picture. It is finished now. Look at yourself with your head dark against the night-hidden olive trees, and the shrine all dim, and the fireflies just lighting your hair like a halo."

"It is wonderful to make such a thing out of those little tubes of paint. I hope somebody will love it well enough to buy it," said Bice.

"It has been a rest and a joy and a blessing to make it, and none can ever love it as much as I do."

"Ah! That is the way with all we make ourselves. Only God understands a piece of real work," she said.



POPPIES

By W. G. Tinckom-Fernandez

EACH secret garnered of the years,
The dear dead dream so long grown olden,
With flaming passion reappears
To sleep beholden.

No longer may chill fingers trace
Sorrow on brave hearts, frail and human—
How in this radiant, velvet grace
Does Love illumine!

Were all earth's splendor cupped in wine,
And offered me for sumptuous drinking—
Here should I find Love's anodyne,
Life's slow unlinking.



THE VICTOR

By Louis Untermeyer

BRUISED in the grapple with Trade;
Scourged with its merciless whips;
Love, I shall combat its strength unafraid,
Knowing I still have your lips.

Bound to the torturing wheel,
Sold like a slave in the mart—
Nothing can break me, oh, love, while I feel
Your cool hands and fiery heart.

Cries and contempestuous pain—
War in a world of unrest . . .
Give me the battle again and again
With the conquering hope of your breast!

THE NIGHT ROMANCE OF EUROPE: BERLIN

By George Jean Nathan

This is the second in a series of articles dealing with the night romance of the capitals of Europe. The first article, in the October number of the *THE SMART SET*, dealt with the night life of Vienna. No attempt is being made in this series to offer a guide to the cities or to criticize the customs of the people. The articles are written in the spirit of their subject matter, without moral or ethical considerations. The December installment, written by Willard Huntington Wright, will picture the night life in London.

I AM back again, back again in New York. My rooms are littered with battered bags and down-at-the-heel walking sticks and still-damp steamer rugs, lying where they dropped from the hands of maudlin bellboys. My trunks are creaking their way down the hall, urged on by a perspiring, muttering porter. The windows, still locked and gone blue-gray with the August heat, rattle to the echo of the "L" trains a block away, trains rankling up to Harlem with a sweating, struggling people, the people of the Republic, their day's grind over, jamming their one way to a thousand flat houses, there to await, in an all unconscious poverty, the sunrise of still such another day. The last crack of a triphammer, peckering at a giant pile of iron down the block, dies out on the dead air. A taxicab, rrrrr-ing in the street below, grunts its horn. A newsboy, in neuralgic yowl, bawls out a sporting extra. Another "L" train and the panes rattle again. A momentary quiet . . . and from somewhere in a nearby street I hear a grind-organ. What is the tune it is playing? I've heard it, I know—somewhere; but—no, I can't remember. I try—I try to follow the air—but no use. And then, presently, one of the notes whispers into my puckering lips a single word—"Mariechen." Then other notes whisper others—"du süßes Viehchen"; and then others still others—

"*du bist mein alles, bist mein Traum.*" And the battered bags and the down-at-the-heel walking sticks and the still-damp steamer rugs and the trunks creaking down the hallway and the rattle of the "L" trains fade out of my eyes and ears and again dear little Hulda is with me under the Linden trees—poor dear little Hulda who ever in the years to come shall bring back to me the starlit romance of youth—and again I feel her so soft hand in mine and again I hear her whisper the *auf wiederseh'n* that was to be our last good-bye—and I am three thousand miles over the seas. For it's night for me again in Berlin—*kronprinzessin* of the cities of the world.

I am again on the hitherward shore of the Hundekehlensee, flashing back its diamond smiles at the setting sun. I am sitting again near the water's edge in the moist shade of the Grunewald, and the trees sing for me the poetry that they once sang to the palette of Leistikow. My nose cools itself in the recesses of a translucent *schoppen* of Johannisberger, proud beverage in whose every topaz drop lies imprisoned the kiss of a peasant girl of Prussia. From the southward side of the Grunewaldsee the horn of a distant hunting lodge seems to call a welcome to the timid stars; and then I seem to hear another—or is it just an echo?—from somewhere out the spur of

the Havelberge beyond. Or is it just the Johannisberger, soul of the most imaginative grape in Christendom? Or—woe is me—am I really back again across the seas in New York, and is what I hear only the horn of the taxicab, rrrrrr-ing in the street below?

But I open my too-dreaming eyes—and yes: I am in the Grunewald. And the summer sun is saffron in the waters of the lake. And about me, at a thousand tables under the Grunewald trees, are a thousand people and more, the people of the Kaiserland, their day's work over, clinking a thousand *wohlseins* in a great twilight peace and awaiting, in an all unconscious opulence, the sunrise of yet such another day. And a great band, swung into the measures by a firm-bellied *kapellmeister* as gorgeous in his pounds of gold braid as a peafowl, sets sail into "Parsifal" against a spray of salivary brass. And the air about me is full of "Kellner!" and "Zwei Seidel, bittel!" and "Wiener Roastbraten und Stangenspargel mit geschlagener Butter!" and "Zwei Seidel, bittel!" and "Junge Kohlrabi mit gebratenen Sardellenklopsen!" and "Zwei Seidel, bittel!" and "Sahnenfilets mit Schwenkkartoffeln!" and "Zwei Seidel, bittel!" and a thousand *schmeckt's guts* and a thousand *prosits* and "Zwei Seidel, bittel!" And no outrage upon the ear is in all this guttural B minor, no rape of exotic tympani, but a sense rather of superb languor and wholesome tranquillity, of harmonious stomachic socialism, an orchestration of honest ovens and a diapason of honest *bräus* and *brunners*, with their balmy wealth of nostril arpeggios and roulades.

And thus the evening breeze, come hither through the reeds and cypress from over the purpling Havel hills beyond, takes on an added perfume, an added bouquet, as it transports itself to the sniffer over to the hurrying *krebs-suppen* and thick brown-gravied platters and dewy seidels. My nose, in its day, has engaged with many a seductive aroma. It has met, at Cassis on the Mediterranean, the fumes breathed by *bécasse sur canapés* and Chateau Lafitte '69—and it has ffd and ffd again and again in an ecstasy of inhalation. It has encountered, in

Moscow, the regal vapors of *nevop astowka Dernidoff* sweeping across a slender goblet of golden sherry—and it has been abashed at the delirium of scent. On the Grand Boulevards, it has skirmished with punch à la *Toscane* flavored with Maraschino and with bitter almonds—and has inhaled as if in a dream. The juicy, dripping cuts of Simpson's in London, the paradisian pudding *sûédoise* on the little screened veranda in the shadow of the six-minareted Mosque of El-Azhar in Cairo, the salmon dipped in Chambertin and the artichokes, sauce Barigoule, at Schönbrunn on the road to Vienna, the *escaloppes de foie-gras à la russe* (favorite dish of the late Beau McAllister) at Delmonico's at home—all these and more have wooed mi nostril with their rare fragrances. But, though I have attended many a table and given audience to many an attendant perfume, nowhere, nor never, has there been borne in upon me the like of that exquisite nasal blend of *bratens* and *bräus* with which the twilight breezes have christened me among the trees of the Grunewald. Forgotten, there, are the roses on the moonlit garden wall in Barbizon, chaperoned by the fairy forest of Fontainebleau; forgotten the damp wild clover fields of the Indiana of my boyhood. All vanished, gone, before the olfactory transports of this concert of hops and schnitzls, of Rhineland vineyards and upland *käse*. And here it is, here in the great German out-of-doors, on the border of the Hundenkehlen lake, with a nimble *kellner* at my elbow, with the plain, homely German people to the right and left of me, with the stars beginning to silver in the silent water, with the band lifting me, a drab and absurd American, into the spirit of this *kaiserwelt*, and with the innocent eyes of the fair *fräulein* under yonder tree intermittently englishing their coquettish glances from the *eis-schokolade* that should alone engage them—here it is that I like best to bide the climbing of the moon into the skies over Berlin—here it is that I like best to wait upon the city's night.

Ah, Berlin, how little the world knows you—you and your children! It sees you

fat of figure, an Adam's apple struggling with your every vowel, ponderous of temperament. It sees you a sullen and varicose mistress, whose draperies hang heavy and ludicrous from a pudgy form. It sees you, a portly, pousy, foolish Undine struggling awkwardly from out a cyclopean vat of beer. It hears your music in the ta-tatatata-ta-ta of your "*Ach, du lieber Augustin*" alone; the sum of your sentiment in your "*Ich weiss nicht was soll es bedeuten*." Wise American journalists, commissioned to explore your soul, have returned characteristically to announce that you "in your German way" (American synonyms: elephantine, phlegmatic, stodgy, clumsy, sluggish) seek desperately to appropriate, in ferocious lech to be metropolitan, the "spirit of Paris" (American synonyms: silk stockings, "wine," Maxim's, *jevous-aime*, Rat Mort). Announce they also your "mechanical" pleasures, your weighty light-heartedness, your stolid, stoic essay to take unto yourself, still in tigerish itch to be cosmopolitan, the frou-frouishness of the flirting capital over the frontier. Wise old philosophers! Translating you in terms of your palaces of prostitution, your Palais de Danse, your Admirals-Casinos; translating you in terms of your purposely spurious Victorias, your Riche Cafés, your Fledermauses. As well render the spirit of Vienna in the key of the Kärntnerstrasse at eleven of the Austrian night; as well play the spirit of Paris in the discords of its Montmartre, in the leaden pitch of its Pré Catelan at sunrise. Sing of London from the Astor Club; sing of New York from its Bryant Park at moontide, its Rector's, its ridiculous Café de Paris and its Madam Hunter's. 'Twere the same.

Pleasure in the mass, incidentally, is perforce ever mechanical: a levee at Buckingham Palace, a fête on the velvet terraces sloping into the Newport sea, a Coney Island gangfest, a city's electric den of gilt and tinsel.

But the essence of a city is never here. Berlin, in the wanderlust of its darkened heavens, is not the ample-bosomed, be-garneted, crimson-lipped Minna angling in its gaudy dance decoy in the Behrenstrasse; nor the satin-clad, penciled-eyed

Amelie ogling from her "reserved" table in the silly sham called Moulin Rouge; nor yet the more baby-glanced, shirt-waisted Ertrude laughing in the dunt-toned Café Lang. Berlin is not she who beckons by night in the Friedrichstrasse, nor the frowsy she who sings in the *biercabarets* that hover about the Lichtprunksaal. Berlin, under the stars, is the sound of soldiers singing near the arch of the Brandenburger Tor, the peaceful *bauer* and his frau Hannah and his young daughters Lilla and Mia lodged before their *abend bier* at a bare table on the darker side of the far Jägerstrasse; Berlin, when skies are navy blue, is Heinrich, gallant rear private of Regiment 10, publicly and with audible ado encircling the waist of his most recent *engel* on a bench in the Linden promenade—Berlin, in the Inverness of night, is Hulda, little Alsatian rebel—a rebel to France—a rebel to the Vosges and the vineyards—Hulda, the provinces behind her, and in her heart, there to rule forever, the spirit of the capital of Wilhelm der Grösste. For the spirit of Berlin is the laughter of a pretty, clean and healthy girl—not the neurotic simper of a devastated ware of the Madeleine highway, not the raucous giggle of a bark that sails Piccadilly, not the meaningful and toothy beam of a fair American badger—none of these. It is a laugh that has in it not the motive power of Krug and Company or Ruinart *père et fils*; it smells not of suspicioned guineas to be enticed; it is not an answer to the baton of necessity. There's heart behind it—and it means only that youth is in the air, that youth and steaming blood and a living life, be the world so ever stern on the morrow, are a trinity invincible, unconquerable—that the music is good, the seidel full. Ah, Berlin—ah, Hulda—ah, youth . . . ah, youth, what things you see that are not, that never will be, never were: foolish, innocent, splendid youth!

An end to such so tender philosophies, such so blissful ruminations. For even now the *kutsche* has drawn us up before the door of Herr Kempinski's victual studio, running from the Leipzigerstrasse through to the Krausenstrasse and constituting what is probably the

largest stomach Senate and House of Representatives in the seven kingdoms. Here, in the multitudinous *säle*—the Mosel-saal, the Berliner-saal, the huge Grauer-saal, the Burgen-saal, the Alter-saal, the Erker-saal, the Gelber-saal, the Cadiner-saal, the Eingangs-saal, the Durchgangs-saal, the Brauner-saal and the various other chromatic and geographical saals, one may listen in dyspeptic Anglo-Saxon abashment to such a concerto of down-going *suppen* and *coteletten* and *gemüse* and down-gurgling Laubenheimer and Marcobrunner and Zeltinger and Brauneberger as one may not hear elsewhere in the palatinates. And here, in the preface to the night, one may prehend while again eating (for in Germany, you must know, one's eating is limited in so far as time and occasion are concerned only by the locks of the alimentary canal and the contumacy of the intestines) the grand democracy of this kaiser city. For in this giant eating hall that would hold a round half-dozen New York restaurants and still offer ample elbow room for the dissection of a knuckle and the wielding of a stein, one observes a vast and heterogeneous commingling of the human breed such as may not be observed outside an American charity ball. At one table, a lieutenant of Uhlans with his *mädel* of the moment, at another a jolly old *spitzbub*' sending with a loose jest a girl from the chorus of the Theater des Westens into blushes—and being sent himself in return with a looser. At another (one removed from that of a duo of palpable daughters of joy engaged in a desperate hand-to-hand encounter with a colossal *roastbif englisch mit Leipziger allerlei*) a family man with his family. At still another, another family man with his. At another, the Salome from the Königliches Opernhaus—at another, a noted *advokat*—at another, two little girls (they can't be more than sixteen years old) enjoying their meal and their bottle of Rhenish wine undisturbed, unogled, unafraid.

But why need to pursue the catalogue? This, too, is Berlin. Not the Berlin of Herr Adlon's inn, gilded with the leaf of Broadway and the Strand to flabbergast and ensnare the American snooper—not

the Berlin of the Bristol, with its imitation cocktails—not the Berlin of the Esplanade, gaudy dump of the Bellevuestrasse, with its sugar tongs, finger bowls and kindred criteria of degeneracy—not this Berlin: but the real Berlin of the German people, warm-hearted, mindful only of its own affairs, all-understanding, all-sympathetic, all-human—its larynx eternally beseeching liquid succor, its stomach eternally demanding chow. And, too—and note this well—not the Berlin of the rouged menu and silk-stockinged *kellner*, not the trumped-up Berlin of the vaselined vassal, of the bowing *oberkellner*, not the Berlin of the affected canteloupe (3,50 m.) and the affected biscuit tortoni (2,40 m.)—but the Berlin of *beinflisch im kessel mit Meerrettich* (90 pf.), the Berlin of *kraftbrühe mit nudeln* (40 pf.)—the Berlin of Mamsch and Traube.

And now I am again in the streets of the city, rattling with the racing flotilla of things awheel. (Or is the rattle that I hear only the rattle of the "L" trains a block away, and am I really back in New York?) But no: for still I see in the brilliant Berlin moonlight the bronze quadriga of Victory atop the distant Gate of Brandenburg and still I hear a group of students singing in the Café Mozart, and still—but what is moonlight beside the fairy light in your eyes, fair Hulda? What is song beside the soft melody of your smile? Nomady is in the night air . . . "*man lacht, man lebt, man liebt und man küsst wo's Küsse giebt*" . . . and we and all the world are young. Ah, Hulda, mine own, mine all, and who is that pretty girl tripping adown the street, that one there with the corals at her throat and the devil at the curtain of her glance . . . and that girl who has just passed, that little minx with eyes like sleeping sapphires and a smile as melodious as mandolins by the summer sea? As melodious as your own, fair Hulda.

The play is over and I have alternated a contemplation of the loves and fears, the tremors and triumphs of some obese stage princess with a lusty entr'acte excursion into Culmbacher and the

cheese sandwich, served, as is the jocose custom, in the theater promenade. And thus fortified against the night, I pass again into the thoroughfares still a-rattle with the musketry of wheels. I perceive that many amateur American Al-Raschids are abroad in the land, pockets echoing the tintinnabulation of manifold marks and eyes abulge at the prospect of midnight diableries. See that fellow yonder! At home, probably a family man, a wearer of mesh underwear, an assiduous devourer of the wisdom of George Harvey, a patron of the dramas of Charles Rann Kennedy, a spanker of children, an entertainer at his board of the visiting clergyman, a pantophagous subscriber, a silk hat wearer—in brief, a leading citizen. See him oleaginate his grin at the sight of a passing painted paver. (To his mind, probably a barmaid out for an innocent lark.) See him make for the Palais de Danse where (so he has read in the *Saturday Evening Post*) one may purchase the Berliner spirit at so much per pound. We track him, and presently we behold him seated at a table in this splendid hall of Terpsichore and Thais “opening wine” and purchasing *blumen* for a battle-scarred veteran who is telling him confidentially that she just got in that afternoon from her poor home in a little Bavarian village and that she feels so alone in this great big city, with its lures and temptations, its snares and its pitfalls. Soon the bubbles of the grape are percolating through his arteries and soon the “Grosse Rosinen” waltzer have followed his conscience and soon . . .

“Berlin spirit, huh!” he is telling his wife a month later—“Berlin spirit? All artificial. Just to make money out of the visitors. And very sordid!”

At the Moulin Rouge and at the Admirals-Casino, at the Alhambra and the Tabarin, at the Amor-säle and the Rosen-säle, we track down others such, “seeing the night life of Berlin.” We see them, too, champagne before them, coquetting with Fräulein Ilona, who numbers Militär-Regiment 42 as her gentleman friend, and with innocent-

looking little Hedwig, who in her day has tramped the streets of Brussels and Paris, of London and Vienna; we see them intriguing elaborately with these sisters of sorrow who, intriguing in turn against the night's wage, assist the skirmish on with incendiary quip and tender touch of foot and similar cantharides of financial amour. And we track them later to such institutions as the Fledermaus—“*der grosse luxuriöse, vornehmstes vergnügungsplatz, paradiesgarten, grösste sehenswürdigkeit Berlins*” (in the advertisements)—as the Victoria and the Café Riche, the Westminster and the Café Opera and—

“Berlin spirit, huh!” they are telling *their* wives a month later—“Berlin spirit? All artificial. Just to make money out of the visitors. And very sordid!”

Ah, Cairo dreaming in the Nile's moonhaze—are you to be judged thus by the narrow street that snakes into the dark of Bulak? And Budapest by the Danube—are you to be judged by the wreckage of the Stefansplatz that has drifted on your shores? And you, Vienna, and you, Paris—are you, too, to be measured thus, as measured you are, by the crimson light of your half-worlds that for some obscures your stars?

The Berlin of the Palais de Danse is the Paris of L'Abbaye; the Berlin of the Fledermaus is the New York of Jack's.

But the Berlin that I know and love is not this Berlin, the Berlin of Americans, not the spangled Berlin, the hollow-laughing Berlin, the Berlin decked with rhinestones, set alight with prismatic electroliers and offered up as mistress to foreign gold. When the River Spree is amethystine under springtime skies and the city's lights are yellow in the linden trees, I like best the Berlin that sips its beer in the peace of the little by-streets, the Berlin that laughs in the Tiergarten near the Lake of the Goldfish and on the Isle of Louisa, where watch throughout eternity the graven images of Friedrich Wilhelm the Third and of Wilhelm the First in the years of his boyhood. I like best the Berlin that sings with the studenten in the un-

discovered, untainted *wein* and *bier stuben* of the thitherward thoroughfares, the Berlin that dances in the Joachimstrasse, where the *mädels*, each to herself a Cecilie, shirtwaisted, poor, happy, kick up their German heels, drink up their German beer, assault the *Schweizerkäse* and bring back memories of that paradise of all paradises—the Englischer Garten of Munich the Incomparable, the Divine.

In such phases of this kaiser city, one is removed from the so-called Tengel-Tangel, or *variétés* and cabarets, where the visiting *narrverein* is regaled with such integral and valid elements of Berlin "night life" as "*der cake walk*," "*der can-can*" and "*die matschiche—gelenzt von original importierten Mexikanerinnen*." So, too, is one removed from the garish demi-women of the so-called "Quartier Latin" near the Oranienburger Tor and from the spurious deviltries of the Rothenburger Krug and the Staffelstein, with their "property" students, cheeks scarred with red ink, singing "Heidelberg" (from "The Prince of Pilsen") for the edification and impression of foreign visitors, and fiercely and frequently challenging other prop. students to immediate duel. The girls, alas, in these places are not unlovely. Well do I remember the dainty Elsa of the Hopfenblüthe, she of face kissed by the Prussian dawn, and employed at sixteen marks the week to wink dramatically at the old roués and give the resort "an air." Well does memory repeat to me the loveliness of delicate little Anna, she with hair like the waving golden grass in the fields that skirt the roadways from Targon to Villandraut, and paid so much the month to laugh uproariously every time the hands of the clock point the quarter-hour. And Rika and Dessa and Julia and Paulina—all sweet of look, all professional actresses: Bernhardt's of Fun (inc.), Duses of Pleasure (Ltd.). Not the girls in whose hearts Berlin is beating, not the girls in whose *élan* Berlin lives and laughs. Leave behind all places such as these, seeker after the soul of Berlin. Leave behind the Tengel-Tangel with its uniformed

bouncer at the gate, with its threadbare piano, with its "*na kleiner Dicker*" smirked by décolletés, its doleful near-naughty ditties—"Ich lass mich nicht verführen, dazu bin ich zu schlau, ich kenne die Manieren der Männer ganz genau"—"I won't be led astray, I am too slick for that, I know the ways of mankind, I've got them all down pat." Leave behind the Berlin of the Al-Raschids and keep to the Berlin of the Germans.

Just as the worst of Paris came from America, so has the worst of Berlin come from America by way of Paris. The *maquereau* spirit of Montmartre, with its dollar lust and its poisoned blood, has not yet the throat of this German night city full in its fists: but the fists are tightening slowly—and the voice behind them speaks not French, but the jargon of Broadway. And yet, when finally the fingers work closer, closer still, around that throat, when finally the death gurgle of spontaneous pleasure and of clean, honest, fearless night skies comes—and yet, when this happens, Berlin will still rise from the dunghill. I must believe it. For they—we—may kill the laughter of Berlin's streets—as we have killed it in Paris—but we can never kill the heart, the spirit and the living, quivering corpuscles of German blood. The French may drink stronger stuffs, eat richer foods and love oftener than the Germans, and may be better fighters—but they cannot laugh, they cannot sing as the Germans laugh and sing. And Berlin is the new Germany, the Germany of today and tomorrow . . . the Germany whose laughter will grow louder as the decades pass and whose song will echo clearer from the distant hills. While Paris (to go to Conrad)—is not Paris and her land already at Bankok, and far, far beyond? Her children spent before their day, listening to the too-soon lecture of Time? And all hopelessly nodding at him: "the man of finance, the man of accounts, the man of law, we all nodded at him over the polished table that like a still sheet of brown water reflected our faces, lined, wrinkled; our faces marked by toil, by

deceptions, by success, by love; our weary eyes looking still, looking always, looking anxiously for something out of life, that while it is expected is already gone—has passed unseen, in a sigh, in a flash—together with the youth, with the strength, with the romance of illusions." . . .

But again a truce to philosophizings. It grows late apace. (Ah, Hulda, how like opals in the lyric April rain are your eyes in this first faint purple-pink of the tremulous dawn . . . Were I a Heine!) In my far-away America, Hulda, in far-away New York, it is now onto midnight. I see Broadway, strumpet of the highways, sweltering collarless under the loud electricity of Times Square. I see a fetid blonde, dangling a patent leather handbag, hurrying to an assignation in Forty-fifth Street. I see two actors, pointing their boasts with yellow bamboo canes. A chop suey restaurant flashes its sign. And I can hear the racking ragtime out of Shanley's. A big sightseeing bus is howling the fictitious lure of the Bowery, Chinatown and the Ghetto to gaping groups from the hinterlands. A street-walker. Another. Another. In the subway entrance across the street, a blind man is selling papers. A "dip" calls a friendly "Hello, Dan" to the policeman in front of the drugstore and works his steps over the car tracks toward the drunk teetering against the window of the Jew's clothing store. The air is dust-filled. An intermittent baking gust from the river sends a cast-aside *Journal* fluttering aloft. A dirt-encrusted bum begs the price of a coffee. Another streetwalker, appearing from the backwaters of Seventh Avenue, grins in the drugstore's green light . . .

But to your eyes, Hulda, must be given no such picture. Yet such is the New York I come from: such the New York, stunning by day in its New World strength and splendor, loathsome by night in its hot, illumined bawdry. Ah, city by the Hudson, forgetting Riverside Drive twinkling amid the long tiara of trees, forgetting the still of the lake and cool of the boulders that plead in Central Park, forgetting the

superb majesty of Cathedral Heights and the mighty peace of the byways—forgetting these all for a Broadway! "Have we not, too, of proud traditions, aye and many such there be, but the curse of utter blindness lies on them that will not see."

But the symphony of the Berlin dawn is ours now, fräulein, and have done with intrusive memories, corroding reflections. What are my people doing in Berlin at this hour? What are these prowling Al-Raschids about? Do they know the sorcery of the virgin morning light of Berlin as it falls upon the Siegesallee and gives life again to the marble heroes of Germany? Have they ever stood with such as you, fräulein, in the coral-tipped hours of the dawning day before the image of Friedrich der Grosse in that wonderful lane and felt, through this dead, cold thing, the thrill of an empire's glory? Do they know the witchery of the withering Berlin night as it plays out its wild fantasia in the leaves of the Linden trees? Have they ever been with such as you, fräulein, at the base of the Pillar of Triumph in the Königsplatz or sat with such as you, fräulein, near the Grotto Lake in the Tiergarten, or stood with such as you, fräulein, on one of the bridges arching the Spree, in the first trembling innuendo of morning?

Where are these, my people?

You will find them seeking the romance of Berlin's graying night amid the Turkish cigarette smoke and stale wine smells of the half-breed cabarets marshalled along the Jägerstrasse, the Behrenstrasse and their tributaries. You will find them up a flight of stairs in one of the all-night Linden cafés, throwing celluloid balls at the weary, patient, left-over women. You will find them sitting in the balcony of the Pavilion Mascotte, blowing up toy balloons and hurling small cones of colored paper down at the benign harlotry. You will see them, hatless, shooting up the Friedrichstrasse in an open taxicab, singing "Give My Regards to Broadway" in all the prime ecstasy of a beer souse. You will find them in the rancid Tingel-Tangel, blaspheming the *kellner* because

they can't get a highball. You will find them in the Nollendorfplatz, gaping at the fairies. You will see them, green-skinned in the tyrannic light of early morning, battering at the iron grating of their hotel for the porter to open up and let them in.

For them, are no souvenirs of happy evening hours that sing always in the heart of a Berlin they can never know. For them, shall be no memory of that vast and insuperable *gemütlichkeit*, that superb and pacific democracy, that dwells and shall dwell forever by night in the spirit of the German people. They will never know the Berlin that lifts its seidel to the setting sun, the Berlin that greets the moonrise, the Berlin that meets the dawn. The Berlin that they know is a Berlin of French champagnes, Italian confetti, Spanish dancers, English-trained waiters, Austrian courtesans and American hilarities. They interpret a city by its leading all-night restaurant; a nation by the *demi-mondaine* who happens to be nearest their table. For them, there is no—

But hark, what is that?

What is that strange sound that comes to me?

"*Extral Evening Telegram, extral All 'bout the Giants win double-header!*"

A newsboy, in neuralgic howl, bawling in the street below.

Alas, it is true: after all, I am really back again, back again in New York. My rooms are littered with battered bags and down-at-the-heel walking sticks and still-damp steamer rugs, lying where they dropped from the hands of maudlin bellboys. My trunks are creaking their way down the hall, urged on by a perspiring, muttering porter. The windows, still locked and gone blue-gray with the August heat, rattle to the echo of the rankling "L" trains. The last crack of a triphammer, peckering at a giant pile of iron down the block, dies out on the dead air. A taxicab, rrrrr-ing in the street below, grunts its horn. Another "L" train and the panes rattle again. A momentary quiet . . . and from somewhere in a nearby street I hear again the grind-organ.

It is playing "Alexander's Ragtime Band."



WINTER

By Sara Teasdale

THEY spoke of him I love,
With cruel words and gay;
My lips kept silent guard
On all I could not say.

I heard—and down the street,
The lonely trees in the square
Stood in the winter wind
Patient and bare.

I heard—oh, voiceless trees
Under the wind, I knew
The eager, terrible spring
Hidden in you.

THE FISHER IN THE RED STREAM

By Barry Benefield

THIS was the day, at last. The long November nights were stretching darkness far across the face of the clock, and when Cora rose at five and peered through the window it was all thick black outside. Winter had only recently arrived this far South, but overnight one of those sudden cold "northers" peculiar to the States lying in the Mississippi Valley had descended upon the long pine hill where the charcoal workers were and hurtled on down upon Minden, four miles to the southwest, where the little iron furnace was that the charcoal fed.

The tall pines outside were still moaning, and Cora turned away from the window to light the lamp on the table in the center of the room; its feeble yellow flame was cheerful to look at. The very white, big girl kept snatching her feet alternately from the bare board floor, exclaiming: "Ouch! It shore is cold." Seating herself on the side of the built-in bed, she put on her shoes and stockings first, then quickly got into her other clothes. The brisk movements of dressing had given her some slight warmth, which she now lost standing with the lamp upraised before the little mirror hanging from a nail on the board wall, staring at herself after she had unplaited and combed and brushed her rope-colored hair.

Though still unsatisfied, she forced herself away from the glass. With unaccustomed absent-minded slowness she set the lamp on the table again and blew it out. Patting at her hair in the dark, she tiptoed into her father's room adjoining, called to him to get up, went hurriedly out into the open hall, down the steps and across a small stretch of

ground set with stumps to the two-room windowless shanty some twenty feet away, where a lighted keyhole and the shuffle of feet in the kitchen told her that at least one of her two negro assistants, probably old Ann Weaver, was already astir.

When she got inside, the acidulous Ann, though her speech was impeded by a loosely clicking set of upper false teeth, began berating the plump negro girl who yet lay on the pallet by the huge cooking stove. This was all customary, and the big white girl, paying no attention to the old woman's futile attack upon the wise Minerva, poured some warm water from the kettle into a tin pan for her face and hands; after which she unlocked the pantry in the corner of the room and set out the breakfast supplies for the thirty-two boarders. With characteristic haste, Cora rushed into the adjoining larger room, and having lighted the two lamps and seen that the two long tables were ready—their blue oilcloth covers clear of last night's crumbs and the dishes in place—she opened the outside door and sat down on the steps.

Old Ann came seeking her presently. "Come on back in de kitchen, honey," she urged. "Hit's wahm in dere; hit's cold ernuff out heah to freeze a billy goat's horns off."

"Yeah, yeah; I am, in a minute," answered Cora impatiently. "Watch out; I think I smell somethin' a-burnin'."

"All right, honey," agreed Ann. "All right; I's gwine to leave you 'lone right now."

Once more alone, Cora snuggled her hands further into the muff made by winding up her brown-checked apron,

and gazed again to the northwest, where, on the other side of the hill, was Ben Morgan's convict camp. Her eyes could not go far, for it was still black out among the moaning pines, except for a few scattered squares of yellow lights in unseen shanties, and, once, a flash of red flame from the tip of an unseen coal kiln.

By now, she knew, the forty-odd convicts were also up and moving about; they rose even earlier than the free men on the south side of the hill. She wondered if Bunt were already up. This was the day he was to be turned loose, his term having ended; and good, fat, soft Mrs. Morgan often induced her tempestuous, wooden-legged little husband to do gentle, small things for his contract slaves; so that, maybe, because of the day, he was being permitted to sleep as long as he liked. It was a tender joy to think so. Cora insisted on seeing, in her imagination, the round, red head of Bunt Carey—the men called him Bunt, though Mrs. Morgan said the penitentiary list had him down as Timothy Emmet Carey—she insisted on seeing that head lying luxuriously on a pine straw pillow in the long log guardhouse after the other men were up and shivering.

It came to her that she herself was shivering, and her feet numb; and she stood up reluctantly. It required an effort to go back into the kitchen, more effort than she had yet summoned. The wind of the night had shaken through the forest a richer perfume than usual from the pines, mixed with the clean gray smell of the charcoal smoke.

But gradually the increasing animation out in the dark on all sides was adding to her will to get in to her own work. Down in the corral below the house she heard the mules squealing and fighting around their troughs, and munching and crunching their feed. A forerunner of the boarders, one of the men who watched by the kilns at night lest the wood burn into ashes and not smoulder into charcoal came out of the cold darkness.

"Good mawnin', Miss Cora," he said

amiably. "She shore did turn off shivery, didn't she?"

"Shore did," answered the girl.

He bent over a tin pan on a block of wood by the steps to wash his face; she opened the door and went inside, where the warmth from the cooking stove and the odor of biscuits and bacon and coffee were very grateful.

It was beneath, far beneath, the pride of old Hal Puckett to countenance his daughter waiting on table; at meal times she remained in the kitchen directing the movements of Minerva and Ann. She also ate there, served like a queen by the two loyal negroes. It occurred to her, in the middle of bacon and eggs, that maybe Bunt would get up earlier than usual on this his first free day and start toward Minden, out beyond which lay an alluring and uncharted world.

She jumped up and stood by the stove, playing impatiently with the rattling top of the steaming kettle. It seemed to her that the boarders were taking an interminable time to eat breakfast. Despite the interests of her father, who made almost as much from his "paying guests" as from his four coal-hauling wagons, she wished that every boarder in the dining room were, at that minute, a married man and out in his own shanty in the woods, as a few of the charcoal workers were. She wanted to hurry over the hill to call on Mrs. Morgan—and to look around.

At last the men were done and gone off gabbling—she thought of their talking that way. Always in a hurry, with her mouth slightly open, as if she could not draw in enough breath through her nose alone, and with her face drawn tense below the eyes, this morning the big girl fairly flamed about the eating and sleeping quarters getting the second section of her work behind her. By nine o'clock nothing stood between her and the tremendous call upon Mrs. Morgan; and by nine thirty, with a red shawl hooded over her head and adorned with subtle completion, including her gorgeous yellow shoes, she was tearing through the woods in the direction of the convict camp, half a mile away.

Occasionally she passed near one of the gray, dirt-covered, cone-shaped kilns, from the top of which smoke was slowly curling; and the men on watch always spoke to her, diplomatically shouting an invitation to come and stand by the warm kilns. She only waved her hand, saying adequately with this energetic gesture that she appreciated the invitation but could not stop; and strode on through the low-whispering pines.

The contractor's huge wife welcomed her as one from the celestial regions, which was her customary manner of reception, and led the way into a "settin' room" built on as gigantic a scale as herself. They sat down a dozen feet away from a gaping, sandstone fireplace, in which several four-foot logs were raging up into the black chimney.

"Thought I'd come over for a few minutes," began the visitor. "My maw'nin's work's done an' the girls startin' in for dinner." Cora was eighteen; the acidulous Ann between sixty and seventy.

"What you havin' for dinner today, dear?" asked Mrs. Morgan, gasping at the end of her sentence lest it become smothered and lost somewhere in her colossal figure.

"Cabbage," said Cora. "What you havin'?"

"Navy beans."

"Had them yesterday."

"I had cabbage yesterday," countered the contractor's wife.

With innocently fiendish cruelty Mrs. Morgan dragged on the conversation about beans and cabbage, not mentioning whether Bunt had already gone over the hill on the way to the world beyond. Nor could Cora bring herself to ask directly about him; so they continued to discuss the relative merits of cabbage and beans for working men, while the girl rocked furiously back and forth in her chair, her tense, white face reddened by the roaring flames.

At last she dashed desperately into a pause between beans and cabbage:

"Well, Mis' Morgan, any news on this side the hill? Anything happenin'?"

"Oh, yes, didn't I tell you, dear?

We lose Bunt Carey today—as good a cross-cut sawyer as ever pulled a handle, an' him a office workin' kind of man before he erred. Did you happen to see him at the saw last summer when all the men was workin' without their shirts? Ben says the muscles run up an' down his back like fish a-swimmin', so silent an' smooth an' easy. Ben was proud of him, I tell you. Did you ever notice, dear, how proud little men are to see other little men do things? Though Bunt ain't so very little, exceptin' of his height."

"Yeah," went on the big girl slowly, "I seen him. I seen him a heap o' times." Her voice, in spite of her feminine caution, wandered off into a vague, reminiscent, far-away tenderness.

"Do you remember, Mis' Morgan, that day when I was a-comin' thoo the woods to see you, an' a contrary old tree was goin' to fall in a way the men didn't calculate it was goin' to, an' I was walkin' right where it shorely was goin' to land, an' only him seen me, an' though the guards kept yellin' to him to stop or get shot, because they didn't understand why he was runnin', he darted out an' dragged me away? Do you remember, Mis' Morgan—do you remember that?"

"Yes, dear, I do remember it."

"An' all I could say was, 'Oh!' an' all he said was, 'Good Lord!' whisperin' it low, whisperin' it low. Then I run up here to you. An' I never said as much as 'Thank you,' because we never did speak no more. Couldn't, could we? Well, I remember, he was that way that day—his body shinin', his arms slippery, the hair on his chest all wet. An' after that, passin' thoo the woods—on the way to see you, Mis' Morgan—I seen him; yeah, I seen him a heap o' times like that, his body shinin', the muscles playin' up an' down his back."

She rocked back and forth, quietly now, gazing steadily into the writhing red flames; and, for some instinctive reason, Mrs. Morgan did not hurry to snatch up the conversation in her usual way.

"An' so I guess he went on off to town

this mawnin'?" Cora ventured, desperately, after a while, stopping her chair dead still, not turning her face, waiting with head bent for a blow that might fall crashing with the next throb of time.

"Oh, no, dear; not yet," answered Mrs. Morgan easily.

The very white big girl lifted up her head, wrenching it sideways from Mrs. Morgan, as if to admire the brightly colored lithograph on the wall representing "The Seven Ages of Man." Then her chair began rocking again, at first with tiny joyous movements, growing swiftly to Cora's usual furious pace.

"No, indeed, he ain't gone," continued Mrs. Morgan. "Haven't I ever told you, dear, the way we treat 'em the first day they're free?"

It was the pride of the huge woman's life.

"Tell me again, Mis' Morgan; tell me all about it."

"Well, I always make Ben let a man sleep as late as he likes that mawnin' when his first free day comes. His breakfas' is kept hot for him. Then we bring him into our house. Ben gives him a whole outfit of citizen's clothes an' ten dollars, as provided by law; also a talkin'-to, which is awful to listen to, bein' so blasphemious an' unholy, though Ben does *mean* well. Then I pray. I'm so stout I cain't kneel, dear. But I cross my hands an' close my eyes; then I say: 'Dear Lord, vouchsafe to look closer after your lamb this time, for, Lord, we be all weak an' stumblin'.'"

Mrs. Morgan rocked, very cautiously, two or three times, gazing tearfully into the hungry licking flames.

"Then we make him stay to dinner," she went on, "if we can; not out with the others, but with us, at our own table. You know, dear, I think it kind o' cheers 'em up to be taken right in same as any man from the outside, just as if nothing had happened. An' except-in' of Ben's blasphemious talkin' in the mawnin', there ain't no regards paid, by word or deed or look, to a past that's better dead, dear, better dead an' buried, say I. I often say to Ben—"

"Ain't Bunt stayin' for dinner, Mis' Morgan?" The big girl stopped her

chair again, raised her head again to "The Seven Ages of Man" to hide her eyes.

"Oh, he stays, I reckon. He's out in the woods now, by hisself, walkin' round. He's mighty cas' down, honey, terrible low in spirits."

"What's embezzlin', Mis' Morgan? You said once that was his error."

"Embezzlin', dear? Why, mostly, it's where you are hired by somebody an' you use money belongin' to him."

"Why did he do it?" There was little pain in Cora's voice; it did not matter; she was simply trying to draw out everything and anything she could about him, lest the talk be diverted to some other subject; his reason, whatever it was, was right and ample.

"Nobody knows, dear," sighed Mrs. Morgan. "He don't talk much; the men called him One-Word Bunt behind his back. This mawnin', in the house here, he didn't say hardly anything the whole time. When he first come in he said: 'Now I suppose we'll have the commencement exercises'; an' though I didn't rightly know what he meant, he smiled in a awful way that made me want to cry. He told Ben, after the talkin'-to, that the two years workin' with us in the woods over the State had done his health a powerful lot of good. The longest thing he said was: 'I have a few kinfolks, but decent convicts an' lepers an' such keep away from those they care about.' At the end he said: 'Thank you; you are both very kind.' Though now he's free an' ought to be kickin' up the dust for joy, his spirits are mighty low, honey. Somehow, I'm all trembly about him."

"Well, if the piney woods agree with his health, Mis' Morgan, maybe he'll come back here after rampin' around in town a few days, an' get a job from some of the coal men on the free side of the hill." Cora tried vainly to conceal the treacherous color in her voice. "He's a fine worker, an' everybody around here knows it, an' anybody 'ud give him a job."

"If he comes back," said Mrs. Morgan, shaking her head slowly in prophetic and sad negation. "No, dear, I

never knowed a white man to come back to where he had been a convict slave."

"Well, I must be gettin' back home," murmured Cora after a while, rising with strained deliberateness.

"Do stay to dinner, dear. Your niggers can manage your place for once without you."

"No, I reckon I better be gettin' back home."

"Oh, honey, I know what's the matter with you," went on Mrs. Morgan mournfully. "You think it would be mean you to eat with *him*. You are so proud."

But Cora went on out of the house and into the woods. Bernean herself! She brushed a sleeve across her eyes and stumbled on under the listening forest. He was out here in the woods, somewhere, alone. It was torture to her not to ease herself with violent striding, but maybe she would see him if she walked slowly and cleared her eyes.

Never under the great pines is there much sunlight, but on a clear day some of it, finely powdered, sifts down through the branches into the perfumed gloom below. Today there was no sun. The wind of the night had dragged across the sky and left overhead thick wet clouds that threatened rain or snow. Cora did not see the freed man, so she walked back over the hill and home. For there had come into her head a final plan for the afternoon upon which she was to stake, it seemed to her, whatever happiness had been laid out as her portion for life.

While yet the boarders were exchanging the old jokes about cabbage pot liquor and crumbled cornbread inducing sideshow corpulency, Cora was getting out of the pantry the supper supplies. Before the men had reached the dessert of dried apple pies she had finished her own dinner, and was telling Ann that she was going down to Kincaid's Creek, by the bridge, to fish; that she might not be back until late; and that the cooking of supper was to begin when the proper time came whether she had returned by then or not.

"Fishin' in de winter, chile?" protested old Ann.

"Why not?" asked Cora impatiently. "Fish must get hungry then same as in the summer. The Lord knows, and we do, too, Aunt Ann, men get hungry enough in cold weather. An' the creek never freezes over before January."

She hurried out while Ann was frantically adjusting her false tooth-plate for an argumentative discussion of the well known inconsistencies of fish. A yellow cane pole came out from under the kitchen; the line for it was in her room at the sleeping quarters. There, before the mirror, she bit her lips to make them redder and, having licked a piece of crimson calico until it was moist, rubbed her cheeks with it, a tidal wave of radiant rose surging up over her face and ears at this unusual artifice.

"T'st!" she clicked in the woman's abbreviation of "tut-tut," and rushed out of the house, carrying in a bundle under her gray cloak two extra handkerchiefs, a nightgown and her most precious possession in all the world, a crown of gilded cardboard with twenty scissored points which she had worn at a church entertainment five years before in representation of a wide-eyed angel.

It was already one o'clock; time was pressing. Cutting through the woods, she struck the road below the camp, followed that on, came finally to Kincaid's Creek, a mile below her home. With dry pine straw she covered a place on a damp log, and put down more on the earth for her feet and the softly wrapped crown. Presently the blue-topped cork of her line was floating on the water. There was no bait on the hook, but no one could see that; there was the pole and line for people to see.

Drawing the red shawl and the gray cloak closer around her, Cora sat down and waited, watching up the white sandy road that came over the green hill and crossed the bridge at her side and ran under the leafless willows where the wet place was and turned out of sight at last around a curve, on its way to Minden, beyond which lay that alluring and uncharted world. No freed white man, Mrs. Morgan had said, ever came back from there to the hill where he had been a convict slave.

What to say when Bunt came? She was studying that. They had spoken only once, that time when she had breathed, "Oh!" though she knew at the instant that it was not fear but the clasp of his arms that made her do it, and he had whispered, "Good Lord!" After that there had been only looks, as she had passed through the woods ostensibly to call on Mrs. Morgan; looks between her gray eyes and his brown ones. And yet everybody in the country, on meeting in the road, speaks; he must speak; and then—

All at once it had occurred to her that perhaps the reason she had failed to see him that morning was because he had gone away to town directly after breakfast and the exercises which he had called commencement. Why not? He had a full set of citizen's clothes and the customary ten dollars; moreover, Mrs. Morgan had said he was in low spirits. Why wait for dinner then, when the world beyond the pines was calling? There came an impulse to race back along the white road and over the hill to Mrs. Morgan's to find the very truth. Yet she sat still. If he was gone, he was gone; if he hadn't gone, he would come. It was philosophy, and bitter.

The water of the creek, swollen by the autumn rains and reddened by the washed-down soil from the clay country to the west, swirled and gurgled in a hundred little eddies about the obstructive wreckage of time and chance in its channel. One end of the fishing pole rested on the ground at the watcher's feet, the other on a stump out in the stream. A huge piece of floating bark rammed itself against the stump, drowning the blue cork out of sight below the red water. But the big white girl did not see that; her eyes were up at the farthest visible point of the sandy road.

Three empty coal wagons came from around the bend behind her and were rumbling over the bridge before she saw them.

"Any luck, Miss Cora?" each driver asked with ingratiating affability.

"Not much—yet."

"Mighty muddy water for fishin', ain't it?"

"Yeah, it is."

The tall-bodied wagons, with the occasional patched black holes in their sides where live charcoal pulled too soon had started fires, rattled on up the hill; the watcher begrudged them the few seconds they shut out of her sight small sections of the road.

Bold—she must be bold; for though he was thirty, according to Mrs. Morgan's penitentiary list, and she only eighteen, yet the shadow of his error might have dimmed his courage. And he was in low spirits, too. It filled her with a tender yearning pain to think of him cast down. Yeah, she would be bold—if he hadn't already come and gone!

If he hadn't already come and gone! For a moment the red-hooded head dropped low and the gray eyes stared blinking at the black ground in front of her. Suddenly there broke upon the watcher's ears a fearful shouting and rattling from up the hill. Leaping to her feet, she ran up on the bridge to look. A wagon was racing down the hill leaving a thick trail of smoke behind it.

Cora knew what that meant. Without interest now, she saw the mules come tearing down the hill and plunge into the swollen creek. The frenzied driver snatched a bucket from a wire hook on the side of the wagon bed, got down on the hub of a submerged wheel and began pouring water into the smoking charcoal at a spot he judged to be over the live coals. Presently, from around the curve beyond the willows, came two empty wagons, whose drivers, with their buckets, went to the assistance of their face-blackened brother.

Long before the men had stopped pouring water Cora was talking down from the bridge at them, saying: "You're all right now, Jim; you're all right." She wanted no one near when Bunt came over the hill.

At last the three wagons had disappeared. The big white girl was very cold. She flapped her arms and walked back and forth on the bridge. "Might as well go on home," she cried in her heart a thousand times. "He's come an' gone long ago." But she waited on.

Late in the afternoon snow began

slipping from the chill gray sky. The tiny, feathery flakes covered the floor of the bridge, so that the watcher walked back and forth on a soft white carpet. They tipped the tall pines with white. Then, all at once, they were falling no more. Loaded wagons came rumbling down the hill; empty wagons crawled rattling up it, their drivers always speaking to the fisher on the log.

"Any luck, Miss Cora?"

"Not much—yet."

"Mighty muddy water for fishin', ain't it?"

"Yeah, it is."

And when they were out of sight she mounted the bridge again.

Early the night began creeping across the sunless day. The dulled red stream fought, lunging and gurgling and choking along its appointed way. The green of the multitudinous pines rolling down slowly from over and around the hill went black before the darkness—tremendous snow-tipped plumes quivering in the sighing wind. All through the forest, crowding in smotheringly, stealthy whispers maneuvered. The sandy road, now gone gray, crept fearfully down to the bridge.

And a man was coming down the hill. In the gloom his outline was blurred, but the size of him was right. The watcher by the red stream had been cold and numb; now she was trembling, afire. She could see that his head was bowed; he might not even notice her. She ran down by the log, picked up the bundle and slid it under her cloak, tenderly, tenderly, lest the golden points of the angel's crown be blunted.

He was on the bridge. Now she was on it. He looked up for a second and dropped his head. He did not mean to speak. She must be bold.

"Good evenin', Mr. Carey," Cora said. The exaggerated loudness of her voice astounded her, and she flushed and paled beneath the hooded shawl.

"Good evening, Miss Cora."

He passed on. She heard his feet crunching the soft snowflakes on the bridge. He was passing on; she must be bold.

"Bunt!" she called.

Before he had turned she was rushing on, holding out her one free hand toward him.

"Bunt, it ain't nice what I'm goin' to say to you, but I ain't got much time, have I? You'll understand, won't you, Bunt? One minute you're here, the next you're gone; an' I'll never, never see you again, because Mis' Morgan says none of you ever come back to work where you ain't been free. An' I couldn't go after you 'cause I wouldn't know where to go. I would, yes, I would, if I only knowed where to go; but you ain't a-goin' to even write to me less'n I talk now. An' I reckoned you wouldn't say nothin' 'cause you felt a shadow on you. An' so you'll forgive me, Bunt, if I ain't nice, won't you?"

"Bunt, I reckon nice girls make out like they don't know men are in love with 'em until the men say so. It's a lie, Bunt, it's a lie; they know it the minute it starts—same as a flower knows when the sun comes up in the mawnin'. That day, Bunt, when you snatched me away from that tree that was a-meanin' to kill me, an' held me tight in your arms, an' tighter an' tighter every minute—that day, Bunt, you began to love me. Yes, you did; an' me—God, I can't say it now myself—I can't say it—I'm ashamed! An' you knowed that, too. You seen it in my eyes, an' I seen it in yourn."

"Look, Bunt, down there at that red stream, how it fights on around everything in its way, an' it do keep on. It's got to. An' me, too, Bunt, I got to keep on, same as it does, talkin' what I got to say. Mis' Morgan told me what you said about not goin' back to your folks 'cause you think you might hurt 'em. Bunt, you can't hurt me 'cept by leavin' me behind. Maybe you can't stay here; I reckon your pride couldn't stan' it. An' so I got to go on with you. An', Bunt, I'm afeared for you, too. Somebody's got to watch you, got to stand mighty close by you for a long time; you ain't meanin' well by yourself. I feel it. I know it."

"See, Bunt, here in this bun'el I got all the things from home I need an' care

for; not many, Bunt, not many; jest a few little things an' a ole crown an' a night— God! I ain't nice, Bunt—I ain't nice. I ain't fitten for—"

"Cora!"

"Keep back, Bunt, keep back; I ain't nice."

After a while he turned her loose, and stood against her straining his eyes through the semi-darkness at her face beneath the hooded red shawl.

"Cora, I can get work, and—"

"Hush, Bunt, hush; I cain't stan' no more talkin'. Kiss me again, Bunt—kiss me again."

Presently he let her loose once more, and they went on down the road where the willows were. They passed into the deep shadow there, and out of it. The moon slipped from behind a curtain of cloud; the way ahead of them was radiant and white.



FAIRY GOLD

By Richard Le Gallienne

WHO will gather with me the fallen year,
 This drift of forgotten, forsaken leaves,
 Ah, who give ear
 To the sigh October heaves
 At summer's passing by?
 Who will come walk with me
 On this Persian carpet of purple and gold
 The weary autumn weaves,
 And be as sad as I;
 Gather the wealth of the fallen rose,
 And watch how the memoried west wind blows
 Old dreams and old faces upon the air,
 And all things fair?
 Who walks with me will hear the song
 Of the beautiful dead so lovely still,
 The faith never false, and the right never wrong,
 And all the immortal golden hair,
 The eyes that still shine in the marble grave,
 And the glorious golden hearts of the brave,
 The might no worm can ever decay,
 And the love that never passes away.

Come, walk with me this carpet of gold
 And see the faces made of air,
 Look in the eyes that never grow old
 And hear the fairy voices there.



CHAPERONS—Between two fires.

LOVE AND HATE

By W. Pett Ridge

AS foreman in the works, he was outside the region of chaff, excepting when the younger directors encountered him: the rest of the staff took care to make any comments on his public behavior aside and privately. One or two of the senior hands still called him Teddy, the juniors addressed him as Mr. Apps; the new timekeeper gave a military salute and said "sir." An alert, soldierly man, the new timekeeper: very keen on his duties, and keeping the wooden box just inside the entrance gates spick and span. Mr. Apps honored him on the afternoon before the annual dinner with a word of praise. The general temper of the works was for the moment good, and men became friendly who had in the past been estranged on some question of politics, horse racing, the future life, finances.

"If anyone asks for me," ordered Mr. Apps, "say that I've gone over to the Navigators' Arms, just to make sure that everything's all right for this evening." A less tactful man than the new timekeeper would have made some humorous retort: he contented himself with bringing the right hand sharply to his temple. "Sha'n't be ten minutes at the outside."

The hotel was in some confusion, and this was natural enough in all the circumstances. Earlier scents of cooking were in the air; maids scurried to and fro responding to the instructions of the lady whose name figured over the porch as one licensed to do many things not permitted to ordinary folk; two waiters, hired specially, were setting out the long tables in the club room; the barnmaid arranged flowers there. A few riverside men in the public bar waited to be served with the

patience of folk who recognize that impossibilities cannot be performed.

"Can you spare half a minute, Mrs. Williams?"

"To tell you the truth," answered the proprietress, going on briskly, "I can't!"

He followed her along the passage that led to the kitchen. "I've been entrusted, ma'am, with the delicate task of proposing your health tonight, and I was wondering whether there was anything special you'd like me—"

"Cut it as short as you can," recommended the lady, "and not too much of the melted butter. Maria, has the celery arrived yet?"

"I was in hopes of having a quiet talk with you."

"Some other time, Mr. Apps."

He turned and went as a privileged man into the room at the back of the bar. No one was there, and taking some slips of paper from his jacket he read them, his lips moving silently; now and again he raised his right arm to emphasize a sentence. "I think it's pretty right," he said. Glancing along the mantelpiece, he observed a new photograph amongst the crowd of frames and vases. "She's been and had herself took again," said Mr. Apps, in an enraptured way. He pressed the picture to his lips; a concert of coughs reminded him that the mirror was visible from the public bar.

A good deal of washing that night, when the six o'clock bell rang, and, with the workmen, soft soap was in demand, and testy inquiries made regarding the whereabouts of clean collars. Mr. Apps shaved, and used a tablet of pink soap, specially brought; the paper cover announced that it was of the quality used by all the Principal Ladies of the Stage;

their tastes were evidently in favor of a determined perfume. He put on a white dickey of the kind that is only to be found in certain shops of the outer districts; you would ask for it in vain at Burlington Arcade. His best waistcoat had a rather extensive open space, and the dickey bulged out at one side, and, being adjusted there, emerged at the other side. Mr. Apps, leaving nothing to chance, pinned it at three points to his flannel shirt. Contemplating the ultimate result in the piece of looking glass that leaned on the washstand, he thought, and said aloud, that he had come as near to perfection as was possible to mortal man.

The Navigators' Arms could not spare an apartment to be used as a reception room; fortunately the night was fine, and at half past six the guests began to assemble outside. An air of constraint was evident: some of this was due to the fact that, clothed in their best, the men could not afford to lean comfortably against window sills or the water trough. Children came up to stare at the notable sight; a few of the hotel's regular customers stood away near the quay with a touch of resentment at this interruption to settled customs. Mr. Apps arrived; the workmen made an avenue. A motor car came, and Mr. Apps, waving everyone aside, took charge of the task of opening the door, assisted the owner to alight, helped him to take off a heavy overcoat, escorted him to the Navigators' Arms; the expression of the foreman's features showed that he recognized the importance of the occasion, indicated, too, that he felt well aware no one else could perform the duties in a proper and adequate manner. The men remarked to each other that Apps was in his element.

"Mrs. Williams," with authority in his voice, "this is our chairman for this evening. Sir Francis, this is the young woman who runs this hotel, and who is going to give us something to eat this evening."

"A plain dinner, I hope," said Sir Francis.

"Plain," agreed Mrs. Williams, promptly, "but plenty of it."

"I think you can depend upon the food, Sir Francis," said Mr. Apps. "I've took a good deal of trouble over what I may term the menu, and I rather imagine, Sir Francis—" The chairman of the evening waved him aside, and addressing Mrs. Williams, explained that he was under doctor's orders and described some of the effects that resulted whenever he went too far in the way of food. On Mr. Apps again endeavoring to interpose, the chairman ordered him off to the dining room, and resumed conversation with the hostess.

The foreman, seated at the end of one of the long tables, scarcely remained in his chair for two consecutive minutes when the party assembled; he did keep still whilst grace was said—"For these and all Thy mercies"—but thenceforward he was about the room, here reproving one for misuse of the knife, there giving reminder about a speech to follow the meal; the company said he was like a mechanical toy. Hot dishes were served; the waiters brought well filled plates, and the diners had to resolve whether to take beef or mutton. Sir Francis decided to accept one small slice of well done beef, and found it so much to his taste that he demanded more, and then determined to try the mutton; summoning Mrs. Williams, he paid her a compliment that brought the flush of satisfaction to her cheeks. Mr. Apps, leaving his place once more, went and intercepted her, and complained that suet pudding had not been served; she retorted that this dish went out of fashion years before.

"But my landlady always gives it to me on Sundays."

"You tell your landlady that she's behind the times."

"Don't think I shall," said Mr. Apps. "You see, I intend leaving her shortly."

"Why is that?" she asked, without much display of interest.

"You wait," he said meaningly, "until you've heard my speech."

He concealed impatience whilst the chairman gave the loyal toast and "Success to the firm!" (with guarded references to a new departure in view), but he made no effort in this direction when

the oldest and the newest members of the staff responded. True, the time-keeper was brief, speaking but half a dozen sentences, but Mr. Apps shouted "Nough said!" before the smart man came to an end; Mrs. Williams had come in to hear the speech, and he gave an imperative order for her withdrawal, which was not obeyed.

"Mr. Apps," said Sir Francis, "will now propose the health of our good and charming hostess. Before he does so, perhaps you will allow me to say that I dine out a good deal—I dine out, in fact, more than is wise for me. (*Laughter.*) I am speaking in all seriousness. (Mr. Apps: "Keep order over there, can't you?" A Voice: "All right, Pomposity; keep your 'air on.") I was saying, when the interruption came from the end of the table—"

Mr. Apps rose to a point of order.

"Sit down!" ordered Sir Francis. "I dine out frequently, and generally at the end I feel thankful that I am exempt from the youthful and no doubt very proper habit of saying a grace that conveys thanks. But I declare I am using the language, not of compliment but of perfect candor, when I assert that a better meal than this—simple in character but admirably cooked—I never wish to taste. (*Cheers.*) Now then, Apps. Let us see what you have to say on the subject!"

Mr. Apps, rising, with the frown of a man approaching an important task, said it was far from his intention to compete with the chairman. The chairman was one, if he might venture to say so, beloved and respected by all. He did not altogether follow the chairman in his references to a forthcoming change; he submitted they were going very well at present, and he had never been in favor of alterations that were made merely for the sake of altering. Coming to the subject of the toast ("Hear, hear"), he begged to endorse nearly everything that had come from the lips of the chairman. Faults might no doubt be found in the meal served to them that evening. Perhaps he was, in regard to his tastes, old-fashioned. (A Voice: "And in appearance.") What was wanted in a hotel

like the Navigators' Arms was a man. A man could give orders, and see that they were carried out. A man could put a stop to any disorder that might occur.

"We never have any," interposed Mrs. Williams.

"Sir Francis," said Mr. Apps, "I am about to do something that is probably, and in all likelihood, unprecedented on the part of a man who makes a public speech. I do not embark upon it without taking thought, and I trust the other party concerned will take what I am about to say as an indication or signal of my high regard. I have reason to believe that our hostess looks upon me with a certain amount of favor. She is aware that, whilst I am by no means what is termed a bigoted teetotaler, I am a man who keeps a very tight control over himself. I have led a healthy, moderate life, never shirking—"

"I don't know what our friend Apps is driving at," said the chairman, "but he appears to think he is unveiling a statue of himself. (*Laughter.*) My motor is waiting, and perhaps he won't mind coming to the question. The toast is that of 'Our Hostess.'"

"I comply with your suggestion, Sir Francis," said the foreman, "and I do so without delay. I ask the present company to drink this toast with musical honors, and I beg to ask the lady to kindly consent to be my wife!"

The idea of the company was to sing "For she's a jolly good fellow!" with great energy, but the startling announcement partially balked vocal intention. The two maids, just inside the doorway, whispered in an agitated, sibilant manner to each other, and one was heard to say: "Oh, I do hope she won't!" Sir Francis covered his head with his hands as one overmastered by deep emotion; he found his handkerchief and said to his neighbor: "This is something to take home to the wife!" Most of the eyes were on Mrs. Williams; she gazed at the floor.

"And so say all of us."

"Mrs. Williams will now reply," announced the chairman. Perfect silence came.

"I am," said Mrs. Williams, looking hard at a colored portrait of Queen Victoria on the wall—"I am very much obliged to you all. My people have done their best, and I feel glad you are satisfied. I have always lived on good terms with the people at the works since my husband died four years ago, and there's never been anything like trouble with any of you. I quite realize that without the works the Navigators' Arms wouldn't be worth a great deal. Thank you very much." She was going to the doorway, when voices recalled her. "Oh," she remarked, "I thought Mr. Apps meant it for a joke. But if he meant it seriously, my answer is that if ever I did get married again"—here she smiled—"I sh'd choose a jolly sight better-looking man than him!"

Several of the younger men, flushed with the meal, approached the foreman and tendered a few words of condolence. There was an interval of ten minutes before the musical portion of the evening started, and everybody had risen, but not all dared to come along in his direction; he spoke with great plainness to those who did so. A messenger arrived with a message. Sir Francis had left, and requested that Mr. Apps should take the chair. Mr. Apps, declaring that he would prefer to be hanged, went out and found his hat and coat. The military timekeeper was talking to the proprietress of the Navigators' Arms.

"Thought yourself very clever, no doubt," he said to her with vehemence, "flouncing me in front of all those people."

"You shouldn't have been so silly."

"Silly or not," he declared, "I'll take jolly good care that you suffer for it. Don't forget that."

"I'll try to remember, Mr. Apps. Mind the mat as you go out!"

He had rehearsed the proceedings very carefully, and it was hard to be robbed of the third act wherein he proposed to give notice to his landlady in Neptune Street, and at the same time a number of grievances which he had stored and warehoused. By his orders, she was waiting up when he arrived, and her hus-

band was with her; they appeared to have quarreled, and were both in the antagonistic mood which only requires a dispute with a third person to vanish and give way to friendliness. Mr. Apps's desire to avoid argument was a wise one, but they refused to entertain it, and, in duet, recited a list of his defects as a lodger; he slept ill that night and gave up the waking hours to tardy invention of repartees. On the way to the works in the morning, he posted a card to the superintendent of the local police station. The alert young timekeeper saluted at the entrance to the works; Mr. Apps accepted a brass token.

"May want a chat with you later on, my man."

"I shall be at your disposal, sir."

The consultation took place that afternoon in a corner of the yard mainly occupied by scrap iron. Mr. Apps had been anxious not to overestimate the smiles that he encountered, but it did seem to him that there was an undue amount of quiet amusement going on, and his pride was hurt, his temper had become heated. He looked the timekeeper up and down.

"Your name's Thompson, I believe."

The timekeeper admitted the accusation. "Formerly in the army." The timekeeper nodded assent. "I think I am correct in saying that you soldier chaps can put away a tidy amount in the way of liquor." The timekeeper gave a gesture, indicating the modesty of one not prepared to blow his own trumpet. "Now I want you to do something for me, and as every laborer is worthy of his hire, I'm going to pay you for it." He took the other's arm, and spoke in a confidential whisper.

At half past six Mr. Apps entered the Navigators' Arms in company with Thompson. Thompson stumbled over the mat in entering, but recovered, to exchange a word with the proprietress, as Apps went on to the private saloon. He followed immediately.

"Now then," said Apps, "you understand that I don't begrudge money over this job; at the same time, I don't wish to squander it. There's moderation in everything. The question I want

to put to you is: What's the stuff that will have the quickest effect? I'm only an amateur in this sort of business; you're a professional. Give it a name!"

"Gin!" suggested the other.

The young man's capacity astounded Mr. Apps. The white beverage served, the ex-soldier said, "Well, here's long life to all of us!" and drank off the contents of his glass in one gulp. Apps, relying for himself on a milder drink, found as the clock went on toward eight that he could not see the hands distinctly; his companion seemed as clear-headed as at the start. Becoming confidential, Mr. Apps forgot much that he had said before, and said it again, repeated it two or three times, and emphasized arguments with a blow intended to strike but just missing the table. He gave one more order, and the barmaid declined to serve him; she professed, however, her willingness to supply the command so far as Mr. Thompson was concerned.

"Wha' you mean by it, miss?" he demanded noisily. "Intend to say I'm the worse for drink?"

"You will be soon if you're not careful. Anyway, you get no more here."

"I'm Englishman," said Mr. Apps, indistinctly, "and I ask you to treat me in proper manner. That's all I ask!"

"James!" called the barmaid.

The odd man engaged at the Navigators' Arms came at once. Taking Mr. Apps's shoulder, he inquired politely whether he was going with or without a fuss. As Apps was sent out, rather violently, through the front door, he came into collision with an inspector of police and a sergeant. They advised him to get off home as quietly as he could, and entered to have a friendly chat with Mrs. Williams and to show her an unsigned postcard.

"Though what would have happened," said Thompson to her, when the officials had shaken hands and left, "if I'd been served with anything but pure water, I shouldn't exactly like to say. Now let's talk about three weeks hence, old dear. That's what's occupying my mind at the present moment!"

The timekeeper left the works on the day preceding the event referred to. In view of the popularity he had gained during his brief term of office (he succeeded an unusually grumpy man), and in view of the notable position he would henceforward occupy, the workmen readily put down their threepences, and a handsome set of spoons was presented. Mr. Apps declined to join in this tribute. He said, decisively, that he had other and more worthy objects for his money. He assured them he wished Thompson well, but he could not persuade himself that the chap had been well advised in marrying a widow. Mr. Apps prophesied that before three months were out Thompson would have left the neighborhood. Doubt being expressed on this point, he made five separate wagers of a shilling each.

"Like to know how much money old Pomposity has got put away," remarked one.

"I lay," said another, "that if the truth was known he's got as much as five and twenty poun'."

Apps's store was greater than they imagined. When he called some days later on a commercial gentleman, he was able to speak, with determination, of hundreds; this occurred at the moment when the other hinted at a disinclination to deal with men of straw. Satisfactory proof of the statement being given, the public house broker aroused himself and promised to do all that mortal man could do, and a good deal beyond. Within a fortnight Mr. Apps received from him a satisfactory communication, and having signed and returned the documents, at once wrote a note which he adorned with the literary skill at his command; he could not conceal his surprise at the calm with which the thunderbolt was received. The clerk to whom he handed it glanced at the letter, turned over the pages and said casually: "Oh, I see. Well, I shouldn't think there'll be the slightest difficulty about that." Sir Francis paid a visit to the works that day and Apps broke the tragic news as gently as he could. Sir Francis appeared concerned, but on ascertaining that Apps was referring to

himself, showed relief, and said something about enjoying the *otium cum dignitate*, a reference that the foreman, in his turn, misunderstood; he retorted that the place was much nearer.

"If I don't see you again then before you go," said Sir Francis, "good-bye and good luck. By the bye, did you repeat the offer you made at the annual dinner? I've been asked once or twice whether anything further happened. I never saw a woman quite so much amused over anything as my wife was when I told her about it."

"Something further has happened, and something still further is going to happen."

"I won't press for the information," said the managing director. "We all have our secrets. I, myself, have been keeping one for some time. I want you to get the men together in half an hour's time, so that I can make an announcement to them."

"It's very good of you, Sir Francis. If there's any suggestion of a testimonial, perhaps you might recommend it should take the form—"

"My announcement will not refer to you, Apps; in the new circumstance, it will not concern you. And if I were you, I wouldn't throw out any suggestion regarding a farewell present. You see, you are not at all popular with the men!"

Apps went about and issued instructions with something more than his usual truculence; in one or two cases where inquiries were made, he had to pretend a knowledge that he did not possess. The men, later, ranged themselves in lines; he went up and down the ranks, ordering hands to be taken from pockets, directing that the attitude should be one of greater precision. "I'd

like to boil him!" said one of the censured men. Sir Francis appeared; Apps directed that caps should be taken off, but the managing director canceled the order.

"I have troubled you to come here," he said, "because I have news to communicate that has hitherto not been made public. It is of some importance, and no one here or near the works is acquainted with it. I say 'no one,' but that is perhaps not strictly correct. I did, some time since, give a hint to the lady who keeps the hotel over the way; Mrs.—Mrs. Williams, I think the name is."

"Thompson, sir."

"Mrs. Thompson. My memory is not so good as it was. I told her because I thought it only fair that she should know. Your directors have given a great amount of consideration to the matter, and they have decided to transfer the works to the North of England. The change will take place without delay, and I wish to express an earnest hope that you will all—with the exception of our friend Apps, who has sent in his resignation—"

Loud cheering from the men.

"—That you will come with us, bring your families, and do your best for the firm in the new sphere of action!"

The name over the porch of the Navigators' Arms is now George Henry Apps. The space occupied by the old works is still in the market, and devotes itself mainly to wild flowers; and when, amongst the few and rare customers at the inn, the question is discussed and the views of the proprietor of the hotel are invited, he is greatly tempted to reply by aiming at the assembled company a pewter tankard.



HOW the whole course of history would have been changed if Mrs. Mary Baker G. Eddy had been baptized Birdie!

FORGIVENESS

By Evelyn M. Campbell

THE man was dead. The woman, the clerk and the policeman looked with varying expressions at each other, their faces barely perceptible in the dim light of the narrow hall. Then they glanced at the still figure that lay across the threshold.

The policeman alone was unmoved. He had seen many dead men and had watched many women weep. He jotted down a brief outline of the tragedy as the woman falteringly described it.

They had gone to the hotel. Her companion complained a little of the closeness of the room; then as they were leaving he had fallen without a sound—like that.

The whole affair seemed ordinary enough, until later on, at the station, it was found that the woman refused vehemently to give her name. Instantly the reporters besieged her, in frantic haste to get at the story they felt was concealed behind her disheveled face, which was pretty even in its abandon.

But there was no story. When at last her piteous defenses were broken down, and lost in a maze of her own hopeless assertions she confessed to her disappointed audience that she was only the trivial wife of a trivial clerk, there was but one man interested enough to listen to her story, which she told readily enough once the ice was broken.

After all, it was just the every day history of a pretty girl married to a salary, which, while enough for two, proved totally inadequate when a sickly baby was added to the *ménage*. There grew to be less and less of everything, and life finally resolved into the oil stove and two furnished rooms. When things became too intolerable to bear, the other man

had come along. He was an automobile salesman, and took her for long jaunts into the country and introduced her to phases of life of which she had never dreamed. She cared nothing for the man, but for the vistas of pleasure he opened to her, a great deal. She could not give it up, and so she had paid. She was crying bitterly when her husband, who had been sent for and given a hasty explanation, entered the room. The two looked at each other in silence.

The man looked what he was—a married clerk. They were just commonplace people and there was no scene. They had at their command no flow of refined vituperation with which to wither one another. The woman's head drooped, and the eager words she had lavished upon the reporter died upon her lips.

"I—I guess you know about it, Freddie," she said, in a tired voice.

"But why—why—" gasped the man, dazed. Her face was hidden in her hands.

"Don't ask me. I could never tell you. I was a fool—crazy." Silence. The man's mind, stunned, inert to his shame, unawake as yet to his poor calamity, grasped subconsciously for the reason.

"Little Fred at home, Rose—didn't you think of him? Wasn't he enough?"

But she never answered save to bend her disheveled head lower. There was a bold-faced clock upon the whitened wall, and now it thrust itself upon the scene by brazenly announcing the hour of four. The man listened, and then corroborated the testimony by a glance at his watch.

"They only gave me an hour, Rose,"

he said. "Get your hat and come on."

She looked up quickly, hardly believing her own hearing. A look of wonder, of disbelief, of dawning hope, and her hand reached for the big rose-trimmed hat upon the table.

It was the listening reporter, a little sorry for the woman, who asked the question her shamed lips could not speak.

"Are you going to take her back?"

To which the husband answered simply: "Of course. If I didn't take care of her now, who would?"

And the other man, through the mere habit of questioning, added:

"That's square of you, you know, but—do you forgive her?"

Fred Ritchie answered without hesitation.

"Of course I forgive her. She is my wife."

The woman went home to her child. Whatever husband and wife might have suffered during that day of exposure and shame, they sat down in the evening to the supper she had prepared as though life were much the same as usual.

He was paler and more silent than was his habit, but he was tired and ate appreciatively of the food she placed before him. It had not come from the corner delicatessen as usual. She had refrained from going there, partly from a half-formed plan of making herself into a better housewife, and partly from a dread of meeting the neighborhood women who congregated there.

She wondered what he meant to do and say, now that they were alone. It was not in the scope of her woman's comprehension that a man could bear such a wrong without reproach. She hardly knew what to expect, but there would be something. Of that she was sure. She watched his face while they sat at the table, and waited. But he said nothing.

The evening passed as had hundreds of other evenings. The little boy begged his father to play, but was refused gently. Tomorrow was Friday, a hard day, and father was already tired, he told the child.

She watched him undress and care-

fully place his neatly folded clothes ready for the next day's wear. She watched him until she could bear it no longer.

He was talking a little to the child, as they both got ready for bed, and not once had his eyes met hers in a direct look. After a while she slipped into the back room which was their kitchen and dining room, and crept out upon the fire escape, which looked on a sea of other back windows and interminable clotheslines. Far below in the paved court children were playing, and their shrill voices without laughter, the voices of the poor, came faintly to her ears.

She pressed her face against the cold iron bars. What should she do? How could she bear the curtain of guilt that his silence wrapped about her in stifling folds? If he would only reproach, upbraid her! She peered into the cavernous depths below. What if she let her body drop over the rail, her poor tortured body? It would all be over then. No one would have the heart to condemn her for her mistake when she showed them that she had suffered enough to die. For a moment her soul trembled upon the brink of eternity—then, like balm to her tortured nerves, the memory of what he had said came to her mind: "I forgive her."

Forgiven! She stood up and passed her hand over her eyes in a gesture of supreme relief. What a fool she was to worry like this because he did not *smile*! And when had she ever cared before? Why, the man in there was only Freddie, after all.

She stepped back through the window, and paused to look from the darkened room into the lighted one beyond. The bed came within her direct line of vision, and she saw her husband and child lying side by side, seemingly asleep.

How small he was! His form, relieved of padded shoulders and the paraphernalia of dress, seemed scarcely larger than that of the six-year-old child—or was it that the child was grotesquely large? She almost laughed at herself. Afraid of him, her husband, who had been her slave for so long that

he could never be anything else! How could she doubt that this was to him more than just a bad dream which was bound to fade away and be forgotten in the face of all the love and kindness she meant to show him? She would never again scorn his little attempts to please, never ask more than he could give, never, oh, never, complain of her lot, for he had taken her back. He had given her her place again at his side; he had forgiven.

A wave of love and gratitude surged up in her heart. She must hear him say it once more before she slept. Softly she approached the bed, meaning to lean over and speak in the gentlest voice, but when she reached the middle of the room, she found herself suddenly upon her knees, a suppliant who dragged herself to his side, with great sobs that tore at her body like invisible hands, and when she reached him, burying her face with inarticulate words on his narrow breast that did not turn to meet her.

"Don't, Rose, don't. I must sleep," he said, and his hands never tightened on hers, and the slow heart within his breast gave not one quickened beat.

The Ritchies moved so far out from the city that it was like entering another world. The increased distance necessitated a half-hour's earlier start in the morning and an equal wait in the evening for his return. So that they saw as little of each other as it was possible for two people living under the same roof to do.

Rose had much time on her hands, for she went nowhere and made no new acquaintances. She bought what she needed in the little neighboring stores, and never went down into the city again. She lived in terror of meeting some of her old friends and being reminded of the tragedy which everyone save themselves had forgotten.

And as time dulls the pain of all things, even remorse, after a while she even grew to be a little happy. She began to sew for a dressmaker, who was almost her only acquaintance, and with the money earned, bought, instead of finery for herself, little luxuries for the table and trifles for the rooms.

Ritchie did not hand her his weekly envelope as of old, but instead doled out a small allowance, which once or twice was made even smaller, without a protest from her. He never asked her how she managed when once the whole had been too small, but one night, when, secretly proud, she placed upon the table a dainty dessert whose price had been hours of needlework, he glanced up suddenly, with a terrible look in his lightening eyes.

"That—that—" he stammered—"how can you buy things like that?"

With scarlet face and trembling voice, she explained hurriedly. Later, when alone, she wept bitterly, and more bitterly still, when she found her little triumph before his plate, untouched. After that the work lost its charm. Her little attempts to win him back had all failed, one after the other, and presently she realized that life was not, and could never be the same.

He was never unkind to her. He came and went to his work like an automaton, and though he did his duty and gave his entire time to the "store," gradually he began to change, and, in the end, even more than she.

Sometimes he forgot to shave, and his shoes often remained unpolished and his clothes unpressed. Such lapses could not long remain unnoticed in a neckwear clerk, and soon the inevitable happened. He lost his position.

So contrary to reason are the secret motives of men that he seemed glad. Rose guessed the reason. The clerks in Hammersmith's, where she had also at one time worked, *knew*. They had been kind and considerate—too kind and considerate; and so had the men higher up. It was more than a man could stand, and so he welcomed what would have been, in another case, disaster.

In his relief he even told her some of the plans he had made during the silent days. To go West. To begin as his own master in one of those wide, free places whose echoes had reached even the city's deafened ears, away from their kind. He wanted to forget. In her gladness at his confidence, she said nothing of her misgivings, and

before long they made their quiet exit from the city that had given them birth, and in a distant State had entered upon what was to be a new life.

The years went by.

The little brown, unpainted house stood in the middle of a patch of stony ground, too poor for cultivation—a little desert of desolation among fields of green and growing things. A morning glory vine had been trained over the kitchen door, to cast a shadow from the western sun, and the little boy sat in its meager shade, his bare feet resting against the broad stepping stone. He had planted and tended the vine, and now he watched its tender leaves that hung wilted and gray in the heat, and wistfully questioned his mother as to its chances of life if the drought kept up.

Ritchie, coming in from the fields, passed through the kitchen into the front room, closing the door behind him. Rose was bending over the stove cooking, and she looked up, following him with mute eyes, a wistful look that asked no reply.

She had altered much during these years of toil. The work that had changed Ritchie into a wiry, muscular man had made her into the twisted, aged semblance of what she had once been. Her shoulders, bent with work, refused to straighten. Her hair, thin and faded to a rusty brown, was knotted at the back of her head in untidy wisps. Her face was scarlet with the heat, and she paused to pass her apron over it when she spoke to the boy.

"If you've set the table, Freddie, go call your father. Supper's ready."

The boy got up obediently, and as he passed gave her a protecting look, but she did not meet his eyes. Presently he came back rather sullenly and reported that his father wanted no supper.

"Did you tell him we had fried chicken?" asked his mother, whispering.

"Yes, an' he said not to kill any more. He wants to sell 'em." The two ate their supper, and when the dishes were put away, Rose set out a lunch, the best of the food, and a pie, which they had not shared, covering it all with a white cloth.

She knew what these sullen periods meant. Her woman's instinct told her that he was fighting with the memory that would not down, and at such times she kept out of his way as well as she could, and humbly laid before him the best of what little she had. But between them the past was never mentioned, although they both knew it to be a silent specter at their fireside, whose presence was felt even by the child who had grown up at its side.

Ritchie struggled against this hallucination, for it had grown to be that, with all the manhood that was in him. As he had grown and broadened physically, the strength of his body had not been without its influence on his brain. He reasoned, argued with himself in those long hours alone with the sky and the soil. She was a good woman now, and had spent her woman's strength freely in his service. She had given all she had in reparation, and was it not enough? She had suffered, too. There was suffering written in her eyes, and in the lines of her toilworn figure. He was not a hard or cruel man, and many times his heart smote him when he saw how tired she was. He had sympathy for her physical ills, but for the other, deeper pain, his sympathy had never lived.

In the late summer of the year the little boy died.

They were people who had repressed their emotions for so long, and they lived among others who had been bred to endure birth and death with such equal stoicism, that during the short time of illness and the function of burial, which among their kind is a rite often turned into a gathering as social as religious, the Ritchies betrayed no more than the recognized quota of grief which those bereft are permitted to show. They "bore up well," the neighbors said, and were duly respected. Among these primitive folk, to rebel against the will of God is to be put beyond the pale of sympathy, and a few days after it was to all save them as though the little boy had never been.

It was sunset on the fifth day, when Rose, coming from the spring with pails

of water, saw Ritchie sitting in the doorway where the other had sat so often and would never sit again.

Her feet dragged beneath their load. A torrent arose within her: a flood of tears and words which only mother love could have brought from her lips.

And, as on that night so long ago when she had crept to his side on her knees, so she found herself now, kneeling before him on the flat white stone, worn smooth by the childish feet. The pails of water tipped and fell, sending their contents in a tiny swirling tide about her dragged skirts. She seized his hands and drew them to her shrunken breast, wetting them with her tears.

"Our little baby—he is gone—gone! I cannot bear it alone! Give me your love again, and perhaps I can see why—This is his place—his stone—his morning glory vine that they tore down when they carried him through the door. When you see me here praying to you, in his place, can't you forgive me—can't you forgive me?"

His face had quivered. She saw it through her tears; then it grew very still.

"I forgave you long ago," he answered. "I took you back. If I hadn't forgiven you then, do you think his death would make it easier now?"

"But you never forgave me in your heart!" she sobbed, made daring in her anguish. "You never gave me a word or thought of love in all these years. Oh, Fred, we are young yet. If we might have another child, one to bring us together, as he did—at first—"

He thrust her away at that, and rushed past her without a word to his refuge, the fields.

They seldom spoke of their loss. She helped in the fields during the harvest, which was large that year, and grew thinner and more stooped and tired every day, but she never complained. Alone always now, since the boy's death, her thoughts turned inward, and who can say what those thoughts were?

Away from her, Ritchie often experienced feelings that were akin to remorse. She was seldom out of his mind, and sometimes, moved by an irresistible im-

pulse, he had even dropped his work, and started toward the house. But when he came in sight of it he would stop, and after a while turn back.

Once he went the whole way. He was prepared to ask for a handkerchief if she questioned his coming, a thing she was unlikely to do. She was not in the kitchen, as usual, and he went on to the front room, stepping softly on the strips of rag carpet that covered the floor. Then he saw her, and what she was doing.

She was on her knees before a trunk, which he had always seen locked and strapped. A folded pile of child's clothing, with some little battered toys of babyhood, lay on one side, and on the other, a miscellaneous heap of her own garments, the faded, creased garments of other days. He saw a large black hat, covered with crushed red roses, and on her lap a thin summer thing, whose tawdry laces she had tried in vain to freshen beneath her stiffened fingers.

He was more silent than ever during the autumn that deepened into winter, with no more talk between them of love or forgiveness. He began reading the Bible, studying it page by page with infinite care, straining his eyes in the early winter twilight, for he had grown penurious long ago, and almost forbade necessities. But for all his study and the groping analysis of his warped mind, he could find nothing in the book to give him the comfort that he sought—the assurance that the course he had taken had been the right one. And then the message came.

Late in a January night there came a rapping at their door, and a feeble voice which asked for shelter. It was a woman, the wife of a laborer at the railroad camp. One of the fearful cataclysms that breed between men and women but not between brutes had driven her to ask shelter from strangers in her hour of need.

She was a young thing, with the grace of childhood yet in her unlined face, but with age-old wisdom and sorrow in the depths of her eyes. And she had been beaten.

Ritchie had forgotten the stranger

when he returned next evening from an all-day trip to the market town, but remembered her suddenly when he saw the doctor's buggy leaving the door as he turned into the lane.

He knew that the woman was dead. Something in the air that brooded over the lonely little house spoke its own message of the passing soul that had gone forth with the day, and when he entered the kitchen he was prepared to find the house in the hands of strangers.

The wife of the nearest neighbor was putting supper on the table. Her half-grown son, a scared look on his foolish face, sat behind the stove, and Rose was nowhere to be seen. The neighbor's wife wore an expression of importance and authority which the meekest of women can assume so deftly when trouble and distress are in the air. She fixed Ritchie with an accusing look.

"The poor thing passed away at four o'clock," she announced, "an' all day Mis' Ritchie ain't left her even for a cup of tea. Now that she's laid out right an' proper in the front room, your wife has took to the baby. Seems she can't lay it out of her hands. I've been here since she sent for me this morning. I can't see my way to set up tonight, but I'll be over tomorrow to help with the funeral."

He sat down in his usual place, the woman in Rose's and the boy in little Fred's. He suddenly felt the loss of the child as he had never done before.

The woman poured a cup of tea for him, but he could not drink it. His hand was trembling. After a while he pushed his chair back, and the others, having finished, made haste to clear the things away.

The woman, bearing a cup and plate, paid a visit to the other room, and he heard voices in whispered conversation. He found himself straining his ears for the sound of Rose's voice, and when it came he was startled by a tone, a timbre, that sent his mind dizzily back far, far into the past years. The boy on the other side of the stove watched him with mysterious, questioning eyes.

The mother came back, and with the boy took her voluble departure.

Ritchie stood for a long time watching the bobbing light of the lantern, as they made their way across the fields.

It had begun to snow a little. In the morning there would be a soft blanket of white over everything. All the ugly, forbidding things of everyday life would be hidden—all would be pure.

He thought of the dead woman, who tomorrow would lie beneath its shelter. He remembered her face, and the marks upon it. She had been beaten—a creature about to give life. He shuddered.

He went into the house, closed the door and sat down by the softly glowing stove. It was past his usual hour for bed, and a heavy weariness began to creep over his limbs. But to reach the loft where he slept he must pass through the room where Rose was. He had never beaten her, had never even spoken unkindly to her. Still he did not wish to meet her eyes.

Perhaps she was asleep, and he could reach the ladder unseen.

He was standing, when there came a sound to his ears—a faint, faint wail; and then, somehow, he found himself leaning over the bed where she lay.

She was not asleep, and her eyes opened and met his in a wide, unfearing look. Her hair was brushed out and lay in two dark, folded wings on either side of her face. Something had flushed her cheeks to a semblance of long forgotten bloom, and for the moment it was only in the gnarled and twisted hands which lay outside the coverlet that she showed the travail of time. She lay quite still, gazing up into his eyes with that strange look in her own, and then he saw upon her shrunken breast, bereft of motherhood, the tiny form of the little babe.

He knew. Over that atom being, breathing its pitiful way into life, he saw and knew what he had done—saw her scourged soul, her reparation.

His knees bent beneath him. He threw his arms across her form with a cry that seemed to burst his heart, but which was only a broken whisper between the hard, hard tears of manhood.

"Forgive me—oh, Rose, forgive me!"

MÉTHODE AMÉRICAINE

By Rex T. Stout

PIERRE DUMAIN sat at a table in the Café Sigognac, sipping a glass of vichy and reading an article in *L'Avenir*. From time to time he gave an impatient grunt, which occasionally reached an audible ejaculation as his eye met a phrase particularly displeasing. Finally he tossed the paper onto the chair at his side and, placing his elbows on the table and his chin in his hands, gazed steadily at his empty glass with an air of deep disgust.

Pierre never felt very well in the morning. True to his calling, he was always more or less uneasy in the sunlight; besides, one must pay for one's indiscretions. But on this particular morning he was more than uncomfortable: he was in genuine distress. He was pondering over a real misfortune. What an ass he had been! Surely he had been insane. Nothing less could account for it. He cast a glance at the newspaper, extended his hand toward it, then nervously resumed his former position. The thing was absurd—absolutely absurd. How could it have been taken seriously? He would write an apology—a correction. But no, that was no longer possible. Decidedly, he must see it through; there was his reputation. Well, for the future he would be careful—very careful. He would be more than circumspect: he would be absolutely polite. But—Bah! What a horrible thought! Perhaps there would be no future? Perhaps this would be his last? This was too much for Pierre's excited nerves. He straightened himself in his chair, muttered an oath half aloud, and called to a waiter for another glass of vichy. It was at this moment that he felt a hand on his shoulder and

heard a voice at his side. Turning, he beheld Bernstein, of *Le Matin*.

"Ah! I congratulate you, my friend," he was saying.

Pierre was on his guard instantly. So the story had already gotten around! Clearly, there was no way out of it. With an effort he forced an easy smile, glanced meaningfully around the half-filled room, and with a gesture invited the newcomer to be seated.

Bernstein, noticing the glass which the waiter was placing before Pierre, elevated his brows and shrugged his shoulders. "Nerves?" he inquired pleasantly.

Pierre resented the implication, mainly because it was true. He grunted a negative, lifted the glass and drained its contents, then spoke in a tone of indifference.

"It is necessary to take care of myself. I expect to need—but perhaps you don't know. Why did you congratulate me?"

Bernstein winked slyly. "Ah! But, my friend, it is useless. The whole world knows it. Over at Lampourde's they are already laying wagers, and at the office the talk is of nothing else. They all envy you. Or, at least, they would envy you if—" Bernstein hesitated and looked at Pierre curiously.

"Well?" said Pierre, with an attempt at lightness. "If—"

"Nothing," said the other quickly. "For, as to that, life itself is a gamble. We must take our chances. And what courage! What glory! What fame! Why, my friend, on the day after tomorrow you can go to old Lisenard and say to him: 'Henceforth I shall expect a thousand francs each for my signed

articles.' And what can he do? That is, of course, if you can go to him at all."

Pierre laughed contemptuously. "I'm not so easily frightened, if that's what you mean. What of that?" He picked up the newspaper on the chair at his side and tossed it across the table.

Bernstein glanced at it and nodded. "Of course," he agreed, "it is admirable, wonderful. All the same, you were a fool. You should not have allowed him to choose. This fellow Lamon is dangerous."

To this Pierre replied with a contemptuous snap of the fingers. The other continued:

"No, but he is. You understand, my friend, it is only for your own good I tell you this. I had it from someone at Lampourde's, I don't remember whom. This Lamon is dangerous."

There was something in the tone that caused Pierre's hand to tremble as he extended it toward his glass.

"You know," Bernstein went on, "he came here but a month ago from Munich. This play was written there. He was stationed there as an officer in a German regiment. And his reputation in affairs similar to yours was such that they called him '*Lamon, le diable*.' That is why I say you have made a mistake. For with the rapier you might get a scratch—no more."

Pierre, during this recital, was doing his best to appear unconcerned. But the pallor of his face was painfully evident and his voice was husky as he said:

"Who told you this?"

"I have forgotten. But, after all, what does it signify? A little practice today and tomorrow, a little luck—and you will be the most talked-of man in Paris. I tell you, you are to be envied; always provided—I speak frankly, my friend—always provided that Lamon misses."

Pierre shuddered. He began to hate Bernstein. What did he mean by this horrible calmness, this brutality? It was certainly a lie, this story about Lamon. Assuredly it was impossible; otherwise, he would have heard it before. Thus, with his brain whirling madly, he sat and pretended to listen to Bernstein,

who rattled on endlessly about Lamon, the gossip of the boulevards, the latest news of the profession. Pierre heard not a word; and a half-hour later, when Bernstein was called away by an appointment, he breathed a sigh of relief and quickly made his way to the street.

Someone has said, somewhere, that there are times when it is braver to run than to fight. Let us hope, for Pierre's sake, that the present instance was a case in point; for he had decided to run. He admitted this at once—to himself—without reservation or shame, standing in front of the Sigognac, staring with unseeing eyes at the passing throng of vehicles. Bernstein's story of Lamon's prowess had finished him utterly and instantly.

The question was: would it be possible to do the thing gracefully? For Pierre loved his skin only just a little better than his reputation, and he ardently desired to save both of them. His brow contracted in a worried frown; he shrugged his shoulders; he sighed. That devil of a Lamon! But now that he had finally decided in favor of his skin, Pierre felt much easier; and soon he devoted his mind entirely to devising a means of escape. An apology was clearly out of the question; he would be laughed at from one end of Paris to the other; and what was more to the point, that demon Lamon would most probably not accept it. A hundred schemes presented themselves and were in turn rejected, and Pierre was ready to give way to despair. There seemed to be nothing for it but ignominious flight. Then suddenly his eyes flashed with joy—an ideal! He considered—it was perfect! He turned and started off down the street at a pace calculated to land him in the Seine within five minutes. Then, recollecting himself, he halted and waved his arms wildly at the driver of a cab across the street. A minute later he was rolling rapidly along in the direction of the Montparnasse Quarter.

It was in front of a shabby, dilapidated building in the Rue de Rennes that the cab finally stopped. Pierre instructed the driver to wait, glanced doubtfully around, looked again at the

number over the door, and finally ventured within. At the end of a hall on the first floor he found a door bearing the inscription:

ALBERT PHILLIPS
Professeur d'Escrime
Méthode Américaine

Pierre, entering in response to the "Come in," which greeted his knock, found himself in a long, low, bare apartment, only less dingy than the hall which led to it. On a chair near the door lay some fencing foils, two or three pairs of boxing gloves and a dilapidated mesh mask. The only other chair in the room, placed in front of a table over near the single window, was occupied by a shabby-looking individual who turned his head at a slight angle as his visitor entered. Pierre, whose eyes were still unaccustomed to the dim light, stood blinking uncertainly. The man at the table turned slowly around and faced him.

"I have come," said Pierre, "to arrange a matter of business. But I believe you are not the right man."

"Then why did you come?"

"Would you care to earn a thousand francs?" asked Pierre after a moment's reflection.

Monsieur Phillips betrayed his first sign of interest. "My dear sir," he replied, "there are very few things in this world I would not undertake for a thousand francs."

"That is well," said Pierre. "But before we proceed further, can you shoot—with the pistol?"

The other frowned and glanced up quickly. "Better than anyone else in Paris," he announced. "But I have said that there are a few—"

"It is an affair of honor," Pierre interrupted.

Phillips elevated his brows. "That's different. Go on."

Still Pierre hesitated. Then, with a gesture of decision, he crossed to the chair near the door, rolled off its encumbrances onto the floor, and placing it by Phillips's table, seated himself.

"Of course," he began, "you can keep a secret?"

"For a thousand francs—yes."

"That is well. You shall be paid.

What I want is easily told. I am challenged to a duel with pistols at twenty paces on Thursday morning at six o'clock. I want—I want you to take my place."

Phillips gave a start of surprise and looked keenly at Pierre. "It is impossible," he said finally. "I should be detected."

"That is my risk. Besides, I can arrange it perfectly. Do you accept or not?"

"Where is the duel to be fought?"

"On the bank of the Seine, just south of the Pont de Suresnes."

"That's dangerous. For you must know the new prefect has issued an edict—"

"That also can be arranged," Pierre interrupted.

"Well—who is your man?"

"Lamon, the dramatist."

"Ah!" Phillips hesitated and appeared to be lost in thought, while his lips were compressed in a curious smile. "I accept," he said finally.

"Good!" Pierre breathed a sigh of relief. "Then there remain only the details."

"Which are somewhat important," the other observed drily. "Proceed, monsieur."

Pierre hitched his chair a little nearer and continued: "First, there is the matter of identity. Well, you are nearly of my size; you will wear my clothing, and you will go masked."

"How can you arrange that?"

Pierre brushed aside the objection with a wave of the hand. "Very simple. You spoke of the edict of the new prefect of police. I shall insist that we wear masks in order to avoid recognition. I shall also arrange to go to the rendezvous alone—any pretext will serve. All you need do is to be there at the appointed hour, speak little and—shoot straight."

"And who are you?"

"You do not know me?" Pierre asked in a tone of surprise.

"I know no one."

"Dramatic critic on *L'Avenir*," said Pierre, taking a card from his case and handing it to the other.

"Ah! This, then, is professional?"

"Yes. I have never even seen Lamon. . . . Of course there are other details to be arranged, and it will be safest for you to wear one of my suits. I will bring it myself tomorrow morning." Pierre was moving toward the door.

Phillips rose from his chair. "But, monsieur! The thousand francs."

"I will bring you five hundred tomorrow morning; the remainder after the duel."

For that afternoon and evening and the following day, Pierre found much work to do. The arrangement of details proved to be not so simple as he had expected. The seconds of Monsieur Lamon fell in readily with his scheme of masking; but Pierre's own friends were not so easily persuaded. They denounced it as childish and absurd, inasmuch as the projected duel was an open topic of discussion in every café in Paris; and they particularly objected to their principal's determination to go to the rendezvous unattended. The thing was unprecedented, monstrously irregular; it would amount, on their part, to an absolute breach of duty. "Our honor, our very honor, will be compromised! It is impossible!" But Pierre, who had much more than honor at stake, prevailed against all entreaties and protests.

On Wednesday morning he spent a full hour in Phillips's room, coaching him against every possible mischance. Luckily Phillips was acquainted with the appearance of one of his seconds, and Pierre gave him a minute description of the other; and since Pierre himself had never seen Lamon, Phillips would of course not be expected to recognize him. As to any minor oddities of gesture or voice they would be easily accounted for as the result of the strain under which the duelist might be supposed to labor. Pierre finally rose from his chair with a gesture of approbation.

"Perfect!" he declared, surveying Phillips from head to foot. "I wouldn't know the difference myself." Opening a purse, he took from it five hundred-franc notes and laid them on the table.

"There is half. And remember, this is the most important of all: after it is over, come at once to the Restaurant de la Tour d'Ivoire. There you will change your garments and become Monsieur Phillips again, and I will pay the remainder. It will be difficult, for they will insist on accompanying you, but you must manage it somehow."

Phillips picked up the banknotes, folded them and placed them in his pocket. Then, turning to Pierre, "There is one thing we have not considered," he said. "What if I am wounded? Then the fraud would be discovered."

Pierre's face paled. "I had thought of that. But we must take our chances. And you—for God's sake, shoot first, and shoot straight."

"Monsieur Dumain," said Phillips, "rest easy. When I aim at this Lamon, I shall hit him."

But that night Pierre was unable to sleep. Whenever he closed his eyes he found himself looking into the muzzle of a revolver which, in size, bore a strong resemblance to a cannon. This was disquieting. Pierre sat up in bed and reached for a cigarette. "It's absurd," he said aloud. "I'm as shaky as though I were going to do it myself."

At half past four he rose, dressed, and finding the cab he had ordered at the door, proceeded through the silent, dim streets toward the Pont de Suresnes.

The rear of the Restaurant de la Tour d'Ivoire, which Pierre had selected as his place of retreat during the duel, overlooked the Seine at a point about a hundred yards up the river from this bridge. It was dilapidated, shabby and disreputable; which was exactly what Pierre desired. What with a garrulous *concierge* and a prying neighborhood, to have remained in his own rooms would have been hazardous; and the Restaurant de la Tour d'Ivoire, besides the advantages already named, possessed the further and greatest one of an old window with broken panes which looked out directly upon the scene of the duel.

The clock was hard on five as Pierre entered the restaurant and accosted the proprietor, who was dozing in a lump behind the little wooden desk. He awoke

with a start and looked angrily at the intruder.

"What do you want?" he demanded.

"I desire a private dining room," said Pierre.

The greasy old man looked angrier still. "The devil you do!" he shouted. "There isn't any." He settled back into his chair and immediately fell asleep. Pierre shrugged his shoulders, glanced around, and noticing a door in the opposite corner, passed through it into the room beyond.

This room was cold, dirty and filled with that particularly disagreeable odor which is the effect of stale tobacco smoke and poisoned breaths in a close atmosphere. Tables and chairs were piled in confusion at one end; a row of them extended along the further wall; and the only light was that which came in through the window with broken panes overlooking the Pont de Suresnes entrance, and its fellow directly opposite. Three or four men, sleeping with their heads nodding at various angles, were scattered here and there on the wooden chairs; another was seated at a table with a bottle before him reading a newspaper, and a drowsy and bedraggled waiter rose to his feet and stood blinking foolishly as Pierre entered.

Pierre, having seated himself and ordered a bottle of wine, looked up to meet the curious gaze of the man with the newspaper. It was sustained almost to the point of impertinence, and at once made Pierre uneasy. Was it possible he had been recognized? The fellow's dress was very different from that of the ordinary habitué of holes such as the Restaurant de la Tour d'Ivoire; and though Pierre could find nothing familiar in either the face or figure, he became every minute more restless and suspicious; until, finally, he accosted the stranger.

"It is very cold," he said, in as indifferent a tone as possible, glancing up at the broken window through which the damp river air found its way.

The stranger started and glanced up quickly. "Were you speaking to me, monsieur?"

"I did myself that honor," said Pierre.

"And you said—"

"That it is very cold."

"Yes. In fact, it is freezing." The stranger shivered slightly and drew his cloak closer around his shoulders. "Do you play?" he asked.

"A little," said Pierre, who felt somehow reassured by the mere fact that the other had spoken to him.

The waiter brought cards and another bottle of wine, and Pierre moved over to the other's table.

For a half-hour the game proceeded, for the most part in silence. Once or twice Pierre glanced at his watch, then up at the window, which from his viewpoint disclosed only a glimpse of dark, gloomy sky and the upper framework of the Pont de Suresnes. Gradually, as the waiter continued to replace empty bottles with full ones, the stranger's tongue was loosened.

"You're lucky," said he, eying the little heap of silver and small notes at Pierre's elbow.

Pierre glanced again at his watch. "Let us hope so," he muttered.

"And yet you are uneasy and agitated. That is wrong. Learn, my friend, the value of philosophy—of stoicism." The stranger waved a hand in the air and grinned foolishly. "Learn to control your fate. For whatever happens today, or tomorrow, you are still a man."

Pierre's uneasiness returned. "You are drunk," he said calmly. "But what do you mean?"

The other pointed a wavering finger at Pierre's hand. "That's what I mean. You tremble, you glance about, you are afraid. No doubt you have a reason; but look at that!" He held out his own hand, which shook like a leaf in the wind. "Observe my steadiness, my calm! And yet my whole future—my whole future is decided within the hour."

"Come," said Pierre, "you talk too much, my friend."

"You are mistaken," said the other with some dignity. "I do not talk too much. I never have talked too much." He laid his cards on the table, picked up his glass and drained it. "Monsieur, I like you. I think I shall tell you a great secret."

"I advise you to keep it to yourself," said Pierre, who was beginning to be bored. He glanced again at his watch. It was a quarter to six.

"Right. Unquestionably right," said the stranger. "The greatest of all virtues is caution." He extended his arm as though to pluck a measure of that quality from the thick, damp air. "At the present moment I am a glowing example of the value of caution. It is the *sine qua non* of success. My motto is: 'In words bold, in action prudent.' Caution! Prudence! I thank you, my friend."

This, being somewhat at variance with Pierre's theory of life, slightly aroused him. "But one cannot be an absolute coward," he protested.

"*Eh, bien*," returned the other, raising his brows in scorn at the bare suggestion, "one is expected to be a man. But what would you have? There are times—there is always one's safety. Preservation is the first law of existence. Now I, for instance"—he leaned forward and finished in a confidential whisper—"would never think of blaming a man for obtaining a substitute to fight a duel for him. A mere matter of caution. Would you?"

Pierre felt a choking lump rise to his throat, and when he tried to speak found himself unable to open his mouth. All was known! He was lost! This drunken fellow—who probably was not drunk at all—who was he? Undoubtedly, Phillips had betrayed him. And then, as he sat stunned by surprise, the other continued:

"The truth is—you see, my friend, I

trust you, and I want your opinion—that is exactly what I have done myself. It was to be at six o'clock," he said. "And he—that fool of a Dumain—proposed for us to mask. That was what gave me the idea."

A thought darted into Pierre's brain like a leaping flame, and forced from him an unguarded exclamation: "Aha! Lamon!"

The other glanced up with quick suspicion. "How do you know that?" he demanded hickly.

But Pierre had had a second in which to recover his wits. "A man as famous as you?" he asked in a tone of surprise. "Everyone knows Lamon."

The uneasiness on the other's face gave way to a fatuous smile. "Perhaps," he admitted.

Pierre's brain, always nimble in an emergency, was working rapidly. He glanced at his watch: there still remained ten minutes before Phillips could be expected to arrive. As for this drunken Lamon, there was nothing to be feared from him. Then a new fear assailed him.

"But what if your substitute is wounded?"

Lamon's lips, tightly compressed in an effort at control, relaxed in a knowing grin. "Impossible." He fumbled in his vest pockets and finally drew forth a card, which he tossed on the table in front of Pierre. "You see, he's an expert."

Pierre, turning the card over, read it in a single glance:

ALBERT PHILLIPS
Professeur d'Escrime
Méthode Américaine



NOT because she wants the last word is woman dreadful, but because she wants the last cent.



SOB—A sound made by women, babies, tenors, actors and drunken men.

SABOTAGE*

By Ch. Hellem, W. Valcros and Pol d'Estoc

The following play, "Sabotage," was one of the most tremendous and startling successes of the Grand Guignol, Paris; and, without question, ranks high among the most sensational dramatic works in modern literature. It deals strikingly with a big living problem, yet never once does it touch its subject dogmatically. It has created more discussion in Europe and America than any other one-act play of its generation. This is the first time it has been adequately translated and offered to the American public. Its presentation here is authorized and exclusive.

CHARACTERS

PIERRE CHAGNEAU (*an electrician*)
ANGELE (*his wife*)
DR. MARGY
MADAME RAUBE (*a neighbor*)
LITTLE JEANNOT

PLACE: *Paris. The present day.*

TIME: *Nine o'clock in the evening.*

SCENE—*A large square room with doors at right, center and left, and a window in the back to the right. In the middle of the room, a little to the right, a small table. On the left a bed. The room is lighted by an electric lamp set on the table.*

SCENE I

PIERRE, ANGELE and, on the bed,
LITTLE JEANNOT

PIERRE (*seated on a chair; he folds his paper while ANGELE is bending anxiously over the child; he rises and goes on tiptoes to look at his son*)
Is he asleep?

ANGELE

No; don't you see—his eyes are wide open! He is looking at us.

PIERRE

He is quiet now—I think he is better.

ANGELE

He seems to be all right now. Oh, I feel so relieved!

PIERRE

He is really much better. He began to rally—did you notice it?—right after the serum injection this morning. It was that rattle in his throat that exhausted him so.

ANGELE

Oh, yes, Pierre, that gurgling noise; I simply couldn't stand it any longer. It was too much for me—it was so unnatural. He hardly seemed to know us when he was choking so. (*Bending over the child*) Jeannot, my little Jeannot, what was the matter with you? It doesn't hurt any more, does it? Tell me, sweetheart—tell your mother.

* Translated by André Tridon.

THE SMART SET

PIERRE

Well, now, you must feel more at ease. Gee, the way you lost your head! I know he was in rather bad shape, and I myself felt rather shaky—but I controlled myself. What a scare, though! See, he is perfectly quiet.

ANGELE

Don't you think his eyes are a little too staring? I hope it isn't the fever coming back. Oh, my poor little darling! I was so afraid God would take him away from us.

PIERRE

A good doctor and good care, believe me—that will prevent God from taking him.

ANGELE

S-sh! He is falling asleep. We mustn't stay near him. Rest will do him good.

PIERRE

Yes, we must keep away from his bed. He must rest. I can't wait to see him stirring around again playing and jumping about.

ANGELE

We shall be so happy when he is well again. The embroidery line is going so well now; and you get good pay for your job; since the company put up these houses for the employees we have a comfortable home; we are almost like capitalists.

PIERRE

Without dividends.

ANGELE

I don't want so many things.

PIERRE

The company hasn't done much for its men, and it will have to better conditions a good deal. Then we'll be, not capitalists, but well-to-do working folks.

ANGELE (*dreamily*)

With our little pile we will buy a house in the country, a little home all our own.

PIERRE

With a little garden.

ANGELE

And flowers. If we had that now our little Jeannot would get well much sooner. He is asleep; he is resting so nicely. S-sh! Don't make so much noise.

PIERRE

Listen: since he is asleep, I think I'll take a little walk.

ANGELE

Do; it will do you good. You have been shut in here for two days, and that's quite unusual for you.

PIERRE

Won't you feel queer all alone?

ANGELE

No; you see, he is perfectly quiet; and then I don't like to have you walk up and down the floor; that makes a noise and you get nervous.

PIERRE

Well, all right then.

ANGELE

Only, aren't there meetings at your union?

PIERRE

Yes, you know, very important meetings, and if it hadn't been for the kid's sickness I would have attended all of them, I assure you.

ANGELE

Are you going there now?

PIERRE

Why, look here, they are discussing very serious questions. What would the comrades think of me by and by?

ANGELE

Let them think what they like. I am not trying to influence you, but if I were you I would keep away from them.

PIERRE

The idea!

ANGELE

They are already calling you a hot-head; you have spoken several times; I am sure the bosses are keeping a sharp

eye on you. If anything should go wrong you would be one of the first to get the sack, and then where would we be, with the boy sick? We'd be in a nice fix.

PIERRE

Well, I suppose you are right, but if everybody reasoned that way there would never be anything done.

ANGELE

Let others do it.

PIERRE

If we hadn't taken a strong stand last time, our demands wouldn't ever have been listened to. We wouldn't have today what little comfort we have.

ANGELE

Well, we have it; let's make the most of it.

PIERRE

That's selfish talk. There are others who are suffering, who are exploited, and who must be helped; less than ever can we lay down our arms; if you imagine that the bosses yield anything out of pure philanthropy you are greatly mistaken. Well, I'll see you later.

ANGELE

So long; do take my advice. If you must go to the union, well, go, but don't get into any scrape, don't make any speeches.

PIERRE

Oh, speeches! There are enough gasbags already in the unions, too much talk, too little action; if they listened to me . . . *(He bends down to kiss the child.)*

ANGELE

Don't kiss him tonight; your mustache might tickle him.

PIERRE *(kissing her)*

You don't mind that, do you?

ANGELE

Silly!

PIERRE

So long.

ANGELE

So long.

SCENE II

MADAME RAUBE, ANGELE, LITTLE JEANNOT

MADAME RAUBE

I saw your man go out, and I thought you wouldn't like to be alone with your sick boy, so I came down.

ANGELE

Well, you guessed right. You are so good! Look at him; what do you think?

MADAME RAUBE

To me he looks much better; he seems to be asleep.

ANGELE

That's why my husband went out for a little while; you know he has stayed in for two days.

MADAME RAUBE

What did the doctor say this morning?

ANGELE

That it was merely a question of time; if there are no complications today he'll be all right. Oh, Madame Raube, that injection this morning, it was something awful.

MADAME RAUBE

I had mine, too, down with diphtheria, but he got over it.

ANGELE

They do get well, don't they, Madame Raube?

MADAME RAUBE

Of course they do. Who would ever think my Ernest had been so sick when he was twelve?

ANGELE

I do wish my little one were as old as your Ernest.

MADAME RAUBE

He'll be soon enough.

ANGELE

Ah, all the worries!

MADAME RAUBE

But for the boy's illness, you have nothing to complain of.

THE SMART SET

ANGELE

It isn't what my man says.

MADAME RAUBE

Still busy with politics?

ANGELE

He is always hanging around the unions.

MADAME RAUBE

They are all alike. Mine had that craze, too.

ANGELE

If he listened to me he would keep quiet. Say what you like, they always get the worst of it with their strikes and all their nonsense.

MADAME RAUBE

Well, now, don't take it too hard; the union is, after all, a better place than the saloon.

ANGELE

Madame Raube, listen! Don't you think he's breathing harder?

MADAME RAUBE

God, no!

ANGELE

Don't you hear? It sounds like a whistle.

MADAME RAUBE

What did the doctor say? Is he coming back?

ANGELE

No, but he told me to send for him if there was the least symptom. Look, look, Madame Raube, how he has changed in a few minutes!

MADAME RAUBE

Now, now, don't get nervous.

ANGELE

Tell me, don't you think he is worse?

MADAME RAUBE

No, dear, he isn't.

ANGELE

And his hands—see, he is moving them! He has more fever! What shall I do?

MADAME RAUBE

Do you want me to fetch the doctor?

ANGELE

Oh, yes, please do. He lives across the street, you know.

MADAME RAUBE

Yes, I know, right opposite. (MADAME RAUBE goes out.)

ANGELE (*to herself*)

He said he would stay home all the evening. Oh, yes, his fever is rising. How red he is, my poor little darling, my baby! And his father out! I shouldn't have let him go. What shall I do? Oh, God! Oh, God! My precious, it hurts, doesn't it? It's terrible! He doesn't even know me! (*She rushes toward MADAME RAUBE, who is coming back.*) Well? Was he there?

MADAME RAUBE

Yes; he is coming right away with all his things

ANGELE

With all his things?

MADAME RAUBE

Why, yes, his instruments. But, my dear, you must not worry yourself to death. He asked me about everything; so he told me that—we should boil some water and have towels—why—and I don't know what else.

ANGELE

But what is he going to do to him?

MADAME RAUBE

I don't know; perhaps give him another injection. Doctors, you know, always need a lot of truck. Have you any water boiling?

ANGELE

Yes; I have had water on for some time. It must be boiling.

MADAME RAUBE (*going to the kitchen, then coming back*)

I turned the gas off. The water had boiled. Oh, how about towels?

ANGELE

There, open the closet; you'll find some. Oh, God! My poor little one! (*The child is choking and stirring in his bed.* MADAME RAUBE takes out a few towels and lays them on the table.) To

cool off the water, put the kettle in a pan under the faucet. That will cool it off quicker.

MADAME RAUBE

You're right; that's the way. (*She goes into the kitchen.*) Your husband will soon be home.

ANGELE

Oh, I hope so; he promised me not to stay out late. (*MADAME RAUBE enters. ANGELE rises after a silence.*) The doctor is so long in coming. You can count on him, can't you?

MADAME RAUBE

Oh, surely.

ANGELE

S-sh! Listen!

MADAME RAUBE

That must be he. (*She goes to open the door.*)

ANGELE

That's he.

SCENE III

ANGELE, MADAME RAUBE, DR. MARGY

ANGELE (*rushing to him*)

Oh, Doctor!

DR. MARGY (*stopping at the door*)
Well, how is he?

ANGELE

He isn't any better.

DR. MARGY

Let's see. (*He goes to the bed and listens to the child's breathing.*) Why, yes, his breathing is somewhat heavier; he is a little distressed. The serum hasn't produced the effect I expected; we shall have to take radical measures.

ANGELE

What will you do to him?

DR. MARGY (*as time is flying*)

Don't lose your courage. The child can't breathe; we must make him breathe at any price and at once. After that we'll be able to wait for the serum to work.

ANGELE

You will operate on him?

DR. MARGY

Yes. Have you any boiled water?

MADAME RAUBE

I have some there.

DR. MARGY

Bring it here, and also a wash basin. Any towels?

MADAME RAUBE

Yes.

ANGELE

Oh, are you going to open his throat? Tell me, are you? That's that operation—what do they call it?

DR. MARGY

Never mind the name; you needn't be afraid.

ANGELE

Oh, Doctor, my child is lost then?

DR. MARGY

Why, no. The ideal!

MADAME RAUBE

My dear Madame Chagneau, the doctor will save your little one. He cured my Ernest when he had diphtheria two years ago; he was as sick as yours, wasn't he, Doctor?

DR. MARGY (*listless and endeavoring not to show his impatience*)

Why, certainly. Have you any cotton?

MADAME RAUBE

Here are two packages.

DR. MARGY

All right. (*To ANGELE*) Now you must be reasonable and leave us two alone with him.

ANGELE

Must I go?

DR. MARGY

Yes, I must not be disturbed while attending to this; please go, and control yourself. I'll call you.

ANGELE

Doctor, will it hurt him?

THE SMART SET

DR. MARGY

No, it does not hurt, and it's over very quickly. Don't kiss him. This is contagious.

ANGELE

Don't hurt him too much.

DR. MARGY

I'll do my best. (ANGELE goes out.)
Now let's hurry.

SCENE IV

(MADAME RAUBE, the child and DR. MARGY)

(DR. MARGY hastens to the center of the room. The child's breathing is more and more labored and irregular. He stirs in the bed.)

MADAME RAUBE

So it's serious?

DR. MARGY

Very.

MADAME RAUBE

Poor kid. When I think—

DR. MARGY

Be still. It isn't tears that will save him. You'd better help me; hurry up. Spread a towel on this table. (While she is doing it, he quickly removes his coat, which he lays on a chair; then he unbuttons his cuffs and turns his sleeves up above the elbows.) The wash basin and water.

MADAME RAUBE

Water?

DR. MARGY

Yes; bring the pitcher. (He opens his kit on the table, and rolls the bed to the center of the room almost under the electric lamp.) Good. Pour it on my hands. (MADAME RAUBE has placed the basin on the table. She pours water on the doctor's hands; he rubs them and his forearms with soap, then brushes his nails.) The cotton now; give me the cotton.

MADAME RAUBE

Here.

DR. MARGY

Thanks. Don't pour any more. Be careful with the instruments. Open the packages of cotton—don't undo them. Don't let your fingers touch the cotton. Put a plate and a bowl on the table.

MADAME RAUBE

Shall I rinse them?

DR. MARGY

No. Have you any alcohol?

MADAME RAUBE (taking the bottle from the sideboard)

Here's some.

DR. MARGY (holding his hands up so as not to touch anything, bringing to the plate and the bowl.)

Pour some out in there. Not too much . . . that's enough. Now light it.

MADAME RAUBE

Where are the matches?

DR. MARGY

I have some in my coat pocket. (The alcohol is burning in the plate and the bowl. MADAME RAUBE puts the matches back into the coat pocket.) A little hot water in the bowl. (MADAME RAUBE pours it out.) All right; a little alcohol on my hands . . . good. Now take a package of cotton . . . hold it. (He makes rapidly a few swabs of cotton, soaks them in water, wrings them out and puts them on the plate, then cleans the child's throat with cotton and soap, then washes it off with alcohol poured out by MADAME RAUBE. To the child, who is moaning) Yes, my little man. There—be good—very good . . . no, no, I won't hurt; be brave. (To MADAME RAUBE) Here, Madame. Take away the bolster. Come back and pour more alcohol on my hands. (She carries out his instructions.) Take the lamp and hold it. Yes—nearer yet—pull the wire—quick, stand there.

MADAME RAUBE (nervous)

Doctor, he isn't breathing any more.

DR. MARGY

Hang it! There is no time to lose. (He bends over the child.)

MADAME RAUBE

Oh, this is awful! (She turns her head away.)

DR. MARGY

Please, please, don't move—I need light; by Jove, I must have plenty of light! (The electric light goes out.) For

God's sake, what's this? You pulled the wire too hard.

MADAME RAUBE
No, Doctor, I didn't.

DR. MARGY
Well, then, what's the trouble?

MADAME RAUBE
Maybe that's a fuse . . .

DR. MARGY
Damn it! I must have a light. Right in the middle of the operation, the child could just slip away.

MADAME RAUBE
Shall I ask Madame Chagneau for a candle?

DR. MARGY
Yes, yes, ask her.

MADAME RAUBE
Madame Chagneau! Madame Chagneau!

SCENE V

ANGELE (*from behind the scene*)
What is it? My child?

DR. MARGY
The electricity is out. Haven't you anything? A lamp? A candle? Anything—but hurry, I beg of you, hurry!

ANGELE
My poor child! My poor child!

DR. MARGY
For God's sake, hurry, instead of howling—hurry!

MADAME RAUBE
And the matches—where are the matches?

DR. MARGY
Here on the table. Here! Quick!

ANGELE
My God, my God, Doctor! (MADAME RAUBE *gropes around the room and breaks a water bottle.*)

DR. MARGY
That candle—damn you, hurry! (MADAME RAUBE *scratches a match and lights the candle held by ANGELE, whose hands are shaking.* Both women come near the

bed. DR. MARGY *is facing them and hiding the child.*)

ANGELE (*with a cry of despair*)
Doctor, all that blood!

DR. MARGY
Don't look, please don't. (To MADAME RAUBE) A little cotton.

ANGELE
Doctor, answer me—don't you see I am going crazy? Why don't you say something? Please, Doctor, what is it? I must know—Doctor, you must tell me the truth—it is my child!

DR. MARGY
My poor woman, you must try to be brave.
(*Voices are heard outside singing the International.*)

SCENE VI

ANGELE, MADAME RAUBE, JEANNOT, DR. MARGY, then PIERRE CHAGNEAU
(*While the mother weeps, shaken by convulsive sobs and mumbling inarticulate words, MADAME RAUBE goes about silently, lights another candle and sets it on the small table. She tidies up the room and gathers up the blood-stained swabs. The doctor stands there ready to leave the room. Outside the strains of the International are heard partly drowned in a rumble of voices:*)

" . . . The International
Shall bring about the brotherhood of man."
(*All grows quiet, then steps are heard on the stairs.*)

PIERRE (*his voice unsteadied by liquor*)
We've got it this time. This beats all the strikes to pieces. That's sabotage, that is! No more lights. I have put the dynamos on the blink. Hear the strikers marching?

DR. MARGY
You miserable fool, look!

PIERRE
Miserable fool! What's the matter?

ANGELE
You! It was you, murderer—you have killed my boy! Murderer! (*She jumps at his throat.*)

CURTAIN.

DEDICATION

By Willard Huntington Wright

FOR you I am a poet. Yea, I sing
As never any poet sang before:
Across my heart there blows a wind of roses,
And in my blood the crimson trumpets blare.

For you I am a poet. In the night
I scatter music mid a crowd of stars.
I build great passionate cities with my singing
And paint with song the colors of the dawn.

But I am not like other men who sing;
Their words are artful and their lips ablaze.
They are the singers of the world, but I—
I am a singer only in my heart.

For you I am a poet. You alone,
Who lie within the temple of my arms,
Can see the banners waving in my heart
And hear the crimson trumpets in my blood.

At your white feet I drink the ages' wine
And reap the ancient gold of other lives:
For you I am a poet blind with rime—
For you I am a singer of red songs.



THE BALLET

By K. B. Boynton

THE hot dreams shuttled through my brain
As mid the red ballet she whirled;
My mind was carried back again
To some far glory of the world.
The torrid music and the rush
Of jumbled, hazy color schemes
Had filled some ruined palace hush,
In ages now but ancient dreams.

MAISON HANTÉE

Par Florian-Parmentier

LES "histoires arrivées" ne sont pas toujours les moins curieuses. En voici une qui me fut contée par Jef Damseaux, le critique dramatique :

—Il était deux heures du matin, me dit-il, quand je rentrai cette nuit-là. J'avais assisté au nouveau spectacle du *Pierrot Noir*, puis m'étais attardé à discuter au café avec quelques confrères.

"Fichu métier que celui de critique. Il faut aller voir mille choses ennuyeuses ou déprimantes, et passer ses nuits dehors, alors qu'on serait si bien dans son lit. Tandis que le pesant sommeil de ma concierge me laissait geler devant la porte, je pestais contre les gens qui ont besoin de lire une opinion étrangère sur la pièce qu'on leur a jouée la veille, et je réfléchissais en bâillant aux heures que j'allais vivre, avant de me coucher, plié en deux sur des paperasses, et griffonnant d'une main fiévreuse mes impressions de la soirée . . .

"Le cordon me fut enfin tiré. Je m'aperçus seulement après avoir repoussé la porte que je n'avais pas d'allumettes. Je me rendis compte dans le même instant de l'épaisseur de la nuit. Même en passant devant la cour, je ne pus voir la moindre lueur, si grands que j'écarquillai les yeux. Rien ne m'est plus horrible que l'angoisse de ne pouvoir percer du regard les ténèbres. Je préfère renoncer à la lutte et clore les paupières. C'est ainsi que je montai les deux premiers étages. Mais, au moment d'arriver sur le second palier, j'entendis une légère crépitation qui me fit brusquement ouvrir les yeux. Je ne vis d'abord qu'une petite flamme bleue, suspendue en l'air, et qui n'éclairait rien. Puis deux rondelles étincelantes se mi-

rent à remuer dans le noir. En même temps, la flamme descendit un peu, et une grimace se dessina, quelque chose comme un large rire de tête de mort, avec cette différence pourtant qu'au lieu d'une bouche édentée, le rire silencieux me montrait deux énormes rangées de dents très blanches.

"Mon cerveau fut sans doute paralysé par cette étrange apparition, car je ne me souviens pas qu'aucune idée me soit venue durant les quelques secondes que je la regardai. C'est par un pur instinct de bête fuyant le danger que je me glissai le long de la rampe, face au fantôme, pour gagner l'escalier du troisième étage. Les marches furent gravies, ma porte fut ouverte, puis refermée, une allumette se trouva entre mes doigts, tout cela sans que je sache comment.

"Je soulevai l'abat-jour pour allumer ma lampe. Mais, en me retournant, je vis voler sur le rideau une gigantesque chauve-souris. Et je me laissai tomber dans mon fauteuil, terrassé par cette réflexion soudaine : Je suis dans une maison hantée! . . .

"Ce fut la première pensée qui se forma dans mon esprit. Jusqu'ici, la terreur avait chassé mon intelligence on ne sait où. La fugitive réapparaissait à présent, mais anxieuse et frissonnante de fièvre. Et voilà qu'elle était comme l'intelligence des enfants : elle croyait aux maisons hantées ! J'eus bientôt conscience de ce qu'avait d'absurde cette supposition. Mais, en même temps, je connus mon trouble, je me sentis anormal, et ma peur d'alors fut cent fois plus terrible que mon épouvante irraisonnée du premier moment. Il y avait dans ma tête un grand trou et des ombres dansaient là-dedans, qui, me semblait-il,

ne seraient jamais plus des pensées d'homme. C'était là plutôt une sensation physique que le résultat d'un discernement de l'esprit. J'avais vraiment une perception nerveuse, organique pour ainsi dire, de la détresse de mon âme, et j'en éprouvais une souffrance qu'on ne saurait imaginer.

"Enfin, je me levai. Machinalement, je me rendis à la cuisine. Là, je touchai au robinet, comme par hasard, et, comme par hasard aussi, je reçus en plein visage une douche violente qui, instantanément, me calma.

"Je revins alors m'asseoir, et je réfléchis. Il était évident que je venais d'être victime d'une hallucination. Ce maudit spectacle du *Pierrot Noir* en était cause. Le théâtre d'épouvante ne valait rien à mon tempérament, et le mieux, désormais, serait de me faire remplacer, ces soirs-là, par un confrère. Ainsi, je ne risquerais plus de prendre, en ouvrant les yeux dans l'escalier, mon éblouissement d'une seconde, aidé peut-être par quelque bougie brûlant derrière une fenêtre, pour une fantastique apparition. Et je ne serais plus étonné, en allumant ma lampe, de voir se promener sur le mur l'ombre de l'abat-jour qu'agiterait ma main.

"Cette logique, sans doute, satisfaisait ma raison, mais, sentant bien qu'elle laissait mes nerfs irrités, je remis au matin le souci de mon article, et je me couchai.

"A quelques jours de là, un confrère me conduisit à la *Huche Rouge*. Le programme comportait des fantaisies chorégraphiques, qui ne nous sollicitèrent que peu de temps. Par une détestable habitude d'hommes de lettres, nous ne tardâmes point à nous replonger dans ces éternelles discussions, aussi passionnées qu'inutiles, sur les théories et les mœurs littéraires de ce temps. Puis, malheureux ouvriers toujours en quête de matériaux, nous observâmes autour de nous, échangeant des réflexions plus ou moins originales, et rééditant des lieux communs quand nos prétendus dons de psychologues ne nous étaient plus d'aucun secours.

"Nous finîmes cependant par nous intéresser aux attractions qui s'offrent au désœuvré autour du promenoir. Le

'nègre-plongeur' nous retint même cinq ou six minutes. Mon ami voulait me faire partager son indignation contre cet odieux exemple d'esclavage au vingtième siècle. Je lui répondis:

"—Mon cher, croyez-vous vraiment que nous soyons moins à plaindre que ce nègre? Regardez-le. Il est sur la sellette, c'est vrai; mais il n'en fait que rire. Quand une balle adroite vient faire manœuvrer la déclanche, il tombe brusquement dans l'eau; mais il ne se noie point. Il ne s'enrhume même pas, car tout son corps est protégé par une imperméable carapace. Et nous, nous qui sommes en butte aux projectiles de tous, et particulièrement aux énormes pavés des confrères, pensez-vous que nous soyons toujours aussi bien garantis contre les bronchites ou contre la noyade? Et notre angoisse morale, pouvez-vous la comparer avec l'insouciance de ce nègre, qui semble s'amuser lui-même à ce jeu, comme un enfant? . . .

"Mon compagnon ne me répondit pas. L'électricité venait soudain de nous manquer. Nous étions environnés de ténèbres. Un cri de surprise s'éleva, jailli de mille poitrines; puis ce furent des exclamations gouailleuses, des bruits de baisers, des huées frénétiques. Quelqu'un fit craquer une allumette. Je levai les yeux . . . et restai stupéfié.

"J'avais devant moi la même petite flamme bleue, les deux mêmes points phosphorescents et le même rire macabre que quelques jours auparavant dans mon escalier! . . .

"Jamais, jamais vous ne pourrez comprendre ce qui se passe en moi. Je crus, l'espace d'une seconde, que j'étais devenu fou.

"A ce moment, l'électricité inonda de nouveau la salle et mes yeux fixes trouvèrent devant eux le nègre-plongeur riant d'un rire énorme et tenant encore au bout des doigts une allumette carbonisée.

"Le lendemain matin ma concierge m'annonçait avec un air mystérieux:

"—Vous savez que nous avons, depuis quelques jours, un homme célèbre dans la maison.

"—Ah! . . . Qui ça?

"—M. Kani-Gouna, le nègre-plongeur de la *Huche Rouge*!"

THE BEST PLAY OF THE EARLY SEASON*

By George Jean Nathan

A NATION'S point of culture is to be estimated—so far as the theater is concerned—in proportion to the respect it does not hold for melodrama. The American people love, honor and obey melodrama above every other form of dramatic art.

When I employ the phrase "American people," I direct reference not alone to the esthetically gelded mob made up of what is (redundantly) called the "average" American—that smutty but harmless bird who gets his musical education off a phonograph or pianola, his knowledge of art from the tooth-paste calendars, his dramatic thrills from Lottie Blair Parker and his critical theories from the billboard quotations. In short, the type of intellectual wrist-watch who is impressed by White Slavery, the acting of Oswald Yorke, the philosophy of Maeterlinck and other things that do not exist. But I include as well that other and probably more promiscuous—and infinitely more dangerous—cuckoo, the American who rates himself above the "average" and who, in passionate endeavor to justify the bill of lading, devotes himself assiduously to John Drew in Shakespeare, Brander Matthews's opinions on the modern drama, Edwin Björkman's opinions on any kind of drama or anything else, and kindred anachronisms. Or, in another description, the stamp of mental valet who unconsciously believes that culture is the state of being bored to death in a fashionable manner—that culture may be gained through a suppression, or at least an irrigation, of natural tastes and impulses.

The natural impulse of American taste is toward melodrama. The American wants in his music much blowing into brass and much pounding with sticks on stretched membrane; he wants in his art nudes rather than landscapes—and the nuder the better (he recently purchased, within the space of two months, three million copies of the bold huzzy taking an autumnal sea bath); he wants dirtier scandals, cleaner plates, broader or narrower shoulders on his coats, handsomer restaurants and worse food, more governing bodies, more laws, more of everything, no matter what it is, than any other biped on the exterior of the globe. Moreover, in his absurd melodrama of mind, he cares not whether the thing be better or worse than the same thing elsewhere; all he requires is that, whatever it is, it shall be more so. For the middle ground, for the halfway, he has small use.

In the theater the American taste (and I include therein the taste of the majority of its professional guides, the newspaper critics) will tolerate little that does not keep the loud pedal screwed hard to the floor. These guides, furthermore, will for the most part fail to grasp and will consequently withhold their complete endorsement from almost any play of any kind that sidesteps a possible melodramatic treatment of theme (however inappropriate). Please bear in mind that I speak here not of admitted melodrama; but of such *pâtisseries* as are known by the names of "philosophical drama," "psychological drama" and the like. Thus, to glance back over the

*Already, of course, in the storehouse.

records, we discover that where such primitive philosophical attempts as "The Terrible Meek" are hosannahed, such exquisite pieces of work as "Les Hanneçons" (The Incubus) are met with silence. The "Peter Grimms" and the "Cases of Becky" and "Witching Hours," suavely perfumed for the native nostril with much psychological melodrama and correspondingly small psychological sense, send the mob to the carpet in a spasm of eulogistic hysteria, while the cool-minded, less top-of-the-voiced and triply respectable "Pigeons"—assaying more genuine psychology to the ounce than all the rest grouped together—are left to play to the ushers.

The complete absence of this quality of melodrama from the play of Ferenc Molnar called "Der Leibgardist" (here flatly named "WHERE IGNORANCE IS BLISS") renders the native nose oblivious and inhospitable to its admirable art, its gorgeous psychologic whimsy, its shrewd wit and humor. And American taste, upon withdrawing from its seat in the playhouse, announces that the piece is "gabby" (there are no revolver shots, no doors smashed, in it), "devoid of action" (it contains no scene wherein an unpolluted package is enticed by villainous white slavers) and that "it presents events which couldn't possibly happen" (in "The Lure," praised in certain quarters as a masterpiece of truth, a man supposed by an exclusive "madam" to be a gas inspector is told by the woman to go in and mix with a private party of aristocratic girl-huggers in the next room!).

The Hungarian Molnar, while not a profound lance, is still one of the most imaginative, subtly humorous and genuinely artistic of our modern theatrical artificers. His "Devil," in the original, was a double gladness—double because Knoblauch's "Faun," which it inspired, perpetuated its amusing core. His "Märchen vom Wolf," not yet put into Anglo-Saxon, is dewy with dramatic freshness and sparkles with the diamond rays of fancy. And his "WHERE IGNORANCE IS BLISS" is not only far and away the best play of the dawning season, but—more than this—with "Fanny's First Play" and "General John Regan," the

most authentic recent foreign contribution to the catalogue of theatrical originality, insight, deftness of treatment and downright fun.

It is a common in-the-circle assertion that you cannot interest the public in plays about actors. This is probably based on the fact that the public thinks it is enough to ask of it that it shall stand *one* set of actors in an evening. An eminently just contention, it may be; yet the superior fact persists that some of the most diverting and aptly done theatrical pieces of which we know have dealt with these very mummers: Pinero's "Trelawney" (and for some his "Mind-the-Paint Girl") in England and the United States, the "Star" of Hermann Bahr in Austria and Germany, the "Cabotine" of Bernard and Athis in France, and our old friend "Zaza," and "Je Dine Chez Ma Mère," to cite a few typical examples. This in-the-circle assertion, therefore, like most of the other in-the-circle assertions, is incorrect. The truth of the thing is not that the public cannot be interested in plays about actors, but rather that the public does not care for plays in which actors are made arbitrarily admirable and heroic figures. The public, in any country, however otherwise unmental, still retains a sufficient *soupeçon* of sanity to reject so preposterous and impossible an appraisal of the genus hamfat. And yet, as is the case with all statements having to do with the theater and the drama, my assertion, too, has its exceptions, its flaws. Need I name more, forsooth, than "David Garrick" and its varied offspring, "The Royal Box," etc.? But, at that, my argument is much better than the other! Molnar's play deals with actors. And the moment the fact became known, the old contention was summoned to the bat by the public's guides and the rival theatrical managers to knock up a few high flies. Is not the whole procedure as typical as it is absurd? What has public taste to do with a good play, anyway? And the mass of our current dramatic criticism only echoes public taste. And the public has no taste.

The chief lash used by our commen-

tating guild upon the Molnar play was this: in the play a wife of six months fails to recognize her husband, who is elaborately disguised. This, argued the guild in all the seriousness of a critical analysis of a government statistical document, was plainly impossible of occurrence. Now, although the wife was an actress who had experienced so many lovers she couldn't remember their exact number—and was still having or about to have more; and although the husband was an actor whose complete self-immersion in many roles was the talk of critical Vienna, I will grant this much. (Even an intelligent person must grant some foolish things once in a while just to get a basis on which to build a subsequent intelligent argument.) And, to grant still another much-made-of point, the play was *not labeled on the program as a satire!* Therefore: if such gentlemen as have made these surpassing points (especially the latter) were not to be handed programs by the ushers when they attended, say, "Arms and the Man," might they not similarly object vehemently to those of its incidents and emotions that do not transpire daily on Broadway? Or when they witnessed, say, "The Philanderer" or "Captain Brassbound's Conversion" or any one of a dozen amusing things of the same or relatively the same genre.

If one were to judge "Peter Pan" by the fact standards of the Charles Klein dramaturgy (just what the desperate analysts have done in the instance of the Molnar psychological satire), wouldn't one have to emit a giggle of doubt over the revivification of Tinker Bell through the beseeched applause of the wine agents and their begold-bagged "lady friends" out front? And would not such specimens as "Lady Patricia" and "The Passing of the Third Floor Back" and "Cæsar and Cleopatra" (the scene at the Sphinx, say) and Brioux's "La Foi"—be dumped, perforce, one and all into the limbo of the lusterless? We may generally depend, in America, on two things: (a) that the public's professional mentors will take the unliteral literally and (b) the literal unliterally. The loose lady of "WHERE IGNORANCE IS BLISS,"

anyway, has no more reason to recognize her temporary man than had the wanton Katusha Maslova of "Resurrection." The Molnar character is merely the Maslova in a Callôt gown.

Such playwriting devices as that wherein the actress, about to receive her supposed lover, adjusts the lamp so that its rays will fall upon her at the proper and most beautifying angle and at the same time (without her thinking of the circumstance) partly conceal the features of the man seated on the other side of the table, only attest more vividly to Molnar's shrewd cleverness in the handling of his tricky and imaginative theme reveal. And his excursions into the egotistical minds of his mummer figures—the disguised actor's indecision as to whether he shall gratify his vanity as an actor by betraying his own wife; the actress's delicious bluff that she was acting all the time, thus proving she is a better performer than her husband (the two have perpetually squabbled over the magnitude of their respective talents), etc.—further emphasize that Molnar is to Hungary what Bahr is to Austria, Schmidt to Germany and Capus to France—an Alexis Carrel of the sex humors of the ganglionic cells and fibres. Upon Miss Rita Jolivet, for her instructed execution of the role of the actress, my benediction. Upon Mr. Fiske, courageous producer, the same.

Just what there is about a bawdy house that should make its picturing on the stage the occasion for such an eyeball-rolling and general rumpus as was last month indulged in by the moral New York constabulary and daily journals, is somewhat beyond my range of vision. I speak, of course, of an accurate depiction of such a seminary, not the spurious melodramatic crayon ponderosities which were revealed in "THE LURE" and "THE FIGHT" and which the virtuous magistrates and editorial writers (in the sly pretense of being not too intimately acquainted with such things) pretended were realistic spectacles. I must give these apparently pure Belials the credit for knowing better. Their divine indignation must surely have been inspired

not by the picturing of the *turnvereins*, but rather by the false and derogatory dramatist presentation of them. To drag these prim, old-fashioned and respectable institutions into the white slave hysteria was enough to set any public-spirited citizen a-boiling with ire! If, forsooth, it be permissible so to outrage the truth as to cast low aspersions of "white slave" baiting upon the residences of Mrs. Kitty Warren; if it be allowable, in the sport of achieving a fact moral, that wild exaggeration be pulled into the picture, may not such themes as the following in like seriousness be stuck upon the stage to teach their correlatively reasonable lessons?

1. A President of the United States opens a beer saloon in order to augment his insufficient salary. The money comes in fast, and the President justifies his course on the grounds that he sells only genuine Löwenbräu—and that at a nickel a big glass. A rascally young Progressive, in an attempt to discredit the current administration, lures the President's daughter into the back room of the saloon where, in the big scene, the President discovers her burying her nose, like any other depraved creature, in a huge tub of the very suds from the sale of which he is making bread money. He seizes his lost child back into his arms and the curtain falls on his ringing speech: "Thank God, Inez, I found you before it was too late! The sins of the father are visited upon his children's heads. If parents only knew! I close this dump tonight. Never again—*never*—shall I sell another *glas bier*!"

2. A man, returning home unexpectedly one night, discovers his wife in a compromising position with the family chiropodist. Confronted by her husband, the wife turns on him and screams: "You don't know—you cannot understand!" Whereupon the husband, after shooting his wife (and then smashing a couple of vases to heighten the thrill), passes his cigarette case to the chiropodist and observes: "I don't blame you, Louis; it's all the fault of the institution called marriage! No man ought ever get married! Just as my happy home has been broken up by a chiropo-

dist, so are all happy homes eventually broken up by chiropodists! My case is typical. This is what marriage always leads to! Let's go out and get a drink." Curtain.

I exaggerate little more, I am farcical little more, than the author of a piece like "THE LURE" who indulged himself in wild brothel hyperbole for the purpose of pointing a spurious moral and adorning his tale (and bank account). Claiming to have been a recent agent of the Secret Service against the business which he sought to sketch in his play, the author, one Scarborough, gave a dozen evidences of never having been closer to his subject than a reading of Reginald Wright Kauffman's "House of Bondage" and that other gorgeous piece of set-fireworks known as "My Little Sister."

I have remarked that I can observe nothing very dreadful in the exhibition on the boards of a so-called house of ill fame (if presented honestly and in accordance with the facts). By this I mean that I can detect no vast intrinsic difference in the portrayal of the animalisms indigenous to such a locality and the incidents of the boudoir lingerie lure of "The Thief" or the boudoir battle of "Bought and Paid For"—save that, in the case of the so-called house of ill fame, the manners are better and they don't make so much noise. A brothel and a boudoir or drawing room are, physically, one and the same thing. The institutions themselves should offer no architectural reasons for objection: everything depends upon the episodes that are made to transpire in them. The mistake that these American play-makers commit in the case of the brothel lies in treating it and its episodes seriously—as serious drama. The Continental dramatists, mellowed in the years of time, know better. They treat such things as farce or, at least, as comedy. Look at Ludwig Thoma and his delicious "Moral" and at Paul Gifféri's hilarious "La Bienfaitrice" and at a score and more other French and German burlesques. In connection with the production of "THE LURE," I beg to introduce to you, ladies and gentlemen,

Mr. Stanley W. Finch, special commissioner of the United States Bureau of White Slave Investigation, the most mellifluous mule that has come within the embrace of this optic nerve these dozen years gone. Stanley, after lending his person in attendance upon this piece, announced himself as having been so profoundly moved by its "great and irresistible truths," so deeply affected by its "overwhelming evidence," that he proceeded to wag his tongue in the public prints thuswise:

"Two-thirds of the girls who enter evil life are innocent girls, who have become the victims of white slavers.

"Twenty-five thousand girls is the average annual crop of innocent victims.

"There are 50,000 'madams' and cadets in the United States whose sole business is the entrapping of girls into white slavery.

"The white slave victims are broken in in fifty-cent and dollar houses frequented only by foreigners in large cities.

"Many of the victims come from good families and were originally abducted by white slavers.

"Not a day passes but what five or six white slave cases are reported at police headquarters in big cities.

"No girl, no matter how well brought up and well safeguarded, is safe from white slavers in this country at the present time.

"The more innocent a girl is, the more likely she is to fall into the clutches of a cadet.

"One hundred millions a year are the profits of white slavers in this country."

Superior walla-walla, *n'est ce pas, messieurs et mesdames?* Do not all of us (save Stanley and his hysterical brother lodge members) know that "white slave" is merely a term that has been conjured up by sentimental American men to conceal from their 'own sentimental eyes the fact that one of their women (Ah, goddess! Ah, angel on thy pedestal!) has erred of her own volition? "THE FIGHT," by Bayard Veiller—him of "Within the Law"—was, in its original form, an interesting melodrama at all points save those where it touched on such improbabilities as the Imre Kiralfy bagnio situated on the main street of a little 6½ Colorado wayplace. What financial chance would such a resort stand in such an open location in any small American town? Even if every politician and copper in the place were back of it! Mr. Veiller is a noble thrill artisan. He

has proved that already. But he must know there are no thrills in fairy tales—except when David Belasco stages them.

Bruce McRae acts in Edgar Selwyn's new farce "NEARLY MARRIED." Bruce McRae also acted in Avery Hopwood's "Nobody's Widow." Therefore, according to the peculiar method of deduction enjoyed by the metropolitan reviewers, "NEARLY MARRIED" reminds them of "Nobody's Widow." By this same standard, Janet Beecher's presence in "The Great Adventure" will certainly cause them to observe that the Bennett play (when it is produced in New York) strangely resembles "The Concert," in which Miss Beecher played a couple of seasons ago. I have watched the phenomenon for several years, and it rarely misses. Every play, in this way, reminds them of some other play—unless it is produced by Belasco. I honestly believe that were Helen Ware, for instance, next week to play "Twelfth Night," "Twelfth Night" would immediately proceed to remind some of my excited colleagues of "The Third Degree." (If Helen Ware acted it, the resemblance might be authentic—but that is here not precisely the point.) As I have already made comment elsewhere, the fertility of our native playwrights is so slack that some certain two hundred or more of our actors are annually cast in the same sorts of roles: but not in these spectacular instances do my brother bloodhounds smell out acute similarities. The similarities of theme that they uncover are more usually similarities not of written roles, but of actors' personal mannerisms and wearing apparel. Fundamental analogies such, for example, as those existing in "The Poor Little Rich Girl" and "Hans Sonnenstösser's Hollenfahrt," "Hindle Wakes" and both "The Worth of a Woman" and Max Dreyer's "Pastor's Daughter of Strelendorf," "Rutherford and Son" and "Les Affaires Sont Les Affaires," "Ready Money" and Mark Twain's "Million Dollar Banknote," "Romance" and Hauptmann's "Elga," etc., they fail to get scent of completely. But let Mary Ryan wear a calico dress and

THE SMART SET

carry a bunch of wild flowers in the second acts of two entirely dissimilar plays and—presto—the later play instantaneously reminds them of the earlier one. The great similarity between the Selwyn and Hopwood farces reposes principally in the dramatic circumstance that in both pieces has Mr. McRae worn a white handkerchief in the outside breast pocket of a light gray suit. "NEARLY MARRIED" is amusing tomfoolery having to do with an about-to-be-divorced couple who wish to make it up, only to discover when finally they have made it up that the divorce has been granted and that the husband has been denied the right to remarry.

Philip Bartholomae's farce, "KISS ME QUICK," came in for a lordly wallop from the newspaper gentlemen; so lordly, indeed, that the author, feeling himself somewhat aggrieved, caused to be printed in the daily journals the following signed bulletin. I quote in main part:

The newspaper reception of my farce neither surprised nor wounded me, for it was directly in the line of precedent, so far as my plays are concerned. But it seems to call for the explanation that I am writing and working for the public, which appears to value my product, and not for most of the reviewers, who do not. It may be recalled that my first play, "Over Night," when presented in New York, was accorded a solitary indorsement in a single newspaper, all the others assailing it with great severity. That play ran with the utmost success for an entire season in New York, was played in all parts of the country by four separate companies for two years, and still is in use. My "Little Miss Brown" was praised by just one New York writer. It remained here profitably and to the apparent satisfaction of the public for three months, and then made a long tour of the other leading cities, attracting large audiences everywhere and actually breaking records in several instances. This letter is not indited in rancor or reproach. It merely sets forth the history to date of three plays not liked by the New York reviewers, and expresses the hope that the public may at least pass for itself upon the merits of "Kiss Me Quick," irrespective of the opinion of professional and possibly jaded critics.

I now quote several typical specimens from "KISS ME QUICK":

I

"I'm sort of on probation."
"What's that?"

"Probation? Oh, that's when you don't touch booze."

"That's *prohibition!*"

II

"I had a girl in Providence once, but she's mad at me."

"Cheer up; maybe it's Providence that makes her mad!"

III

"Yes, I live everything I write."

"Well, I hope you don't write books like 'Three Weeks.'"

IV

"I am crazy to kiss you."

"Well, if you think so, you needn't."

Now, although I have never been able to find it in my conscience to look with artistic favor upon any of Mr. Bartholomae's brain-children—whether "Over Night" or "Little Miss Brown" or "When Dreams Come True" or even "Kiss Me Quick"—I must still confess to admiring his fighting spirit. There is only one thing more admirable in the theater than such a fighting spirit—and that is the ability to write good plays. And I believe that Mr. Bartholomae's inability (or shall I say indisposition?) to compose such good plays is a good thing for him, both as writer and producer. For, did he write good plays, then would he have to do battle not only against the critics (as at present), but against the public as well. Anyway, my dear Mr. Bartholomae, you take American newspaper dramatic criticism altogether too seriously. Remember, in New York at least, Pinero's "Thunderbolt," Galsworthy's "Strife," "Kindling," "The Only Law," Ludwig Fulda's "Our Wives," Leygnel's "Typhoon," Brieux's "Three Daughters of Monsieur Dupont" and two dozen such other admirable specimens have been unmercifully "roasted" in numerous quarters, while such puerilities as "The Terrible Meek," "The Governor's Lady" (hailed by one newspaper commentator as "the play of the decade"), "As a Man Thinks" and even "Over Night" and "Little Miss Brown" (in one instance apiece, at least) have been passionately endorsed.

"THE TEMPERAMENTAL JOURNEY,"

adapted from the French of "Pour Vivre Heureux," becomes through the polished staging of David Belasco and the excellent art of Leo Ditrichstein, a pleasant and graceful theatrical evening—and this, too, despite the inferiority of the piece to "The Great Adventure." (The French play was also derived from Bennett's "Buried Alive" and parallels "The Great Adventure" with the exactness of a set of car tracks.) In its current Anglo-Saxon version, however, a considerable measure of this analogy has been removed and the piece is made to take on more the air of a farcical edition of Tolstoi's "Living Corpse." The leading character—that of the artist—is intrinsically very much the same in both plays, although Bennett's Ilam Carve is a much more shrewdly and humorously wrought figure. In the main, the entertainment at the Belasco Theater is urbanely written, a circumstance which makes one regret all the more the lack of imagination shown in the writing of the fecund scene at the close of the second act, wherein the artist, from his attic window, watches and philosophizes upon his own funeral transpiring in the street below, and the banality of the fable of the poor little canary, related by the artist Jacques to his sweetheart toward the conclusion of the play. Aside from the ethics of the production and a comparison of the play with the Bennett effort (which I described to you from London), "THE TEMPERAMENTAL JOURNEY" embraces a sufficient wit and keenness of discernment to render it acceptable to the adult mind.

At the close of the first act of Owen Davis's "THE FAMILY CUPBOARD," the cold, selfish Mrs. Charles Nelson is coming down the stairs and her son (his back toward her) is yelling at Mr. Charles Nelson: "I've found you out! You're keeping a chorus girl!" A pause (probably designated in the play manuscript as "intense"). Then, from Charlie: "There was no welcome waiting for me here . . . no welcome when I came home in the evenings . . . so I went out and bought myself a welcome!" When again the curtain lifts, we are given

a look at the chorus girl. A tough package, she! Harder, colder, more selfish and doubly more wenchified than even Mrs. Charles Nelson herself. And then and there the play proceeds to go to pieces. It were manifestly impossible for a man of the nature and quality of Charlie to hook up even for an evening with such a creature, let alone the three years announced by the plot. "Welcome," rubbish! Had Mr. Davis (who has spent so much of his life editing chow-chow that probably by this late hour his capabilities have been ruptured) sketched his "other woman" as the other women most always are in triangles such as this: unfiltered, maybe, but yet consistently sweet of disposition (at least, on the surface of things), soft-voiced, wistfully glanced, confiding, clinging—in other words, appealing aboveboard albeit scheming in the rathskeller—his effort might have commanded a more intelligent audition. And I say this in the face even of his divagative construction and his tag-playing theme, which runs from one set of characters to another, slaps them delicately on the wrist and then starts running wildly and blindly round in circles.

It may be urged by the author that, had his chorus girl been of the species I have suggested, it would have been impossible for him to convince his audience that such a sweet baggage would have engaged in the plan of revenge into which he directed her: the marrying of the son to get even with the father after the latter rejects her. Here again, however, would we meet nothing more valid than one of the most archaic of dramatic hallucinations, to wit, that all lady villains are thorough and apparent rascals. It has ever impressed me that most female rogues are dear girls with charming ways: if they were not, they could never succeed so well in the business of villainy. To be a successful knave, whether male or female, one must be possessed of a surpassing personal charm. Look at our most successful Senators, safe crackers, society leaders, Wall Street brokers, lawyers and wiretappers!

"POTASH AND PERLMUTTER," a dramatization of the Montague Glass stories—an amusing session with the regular subscribers to the New York Times. "HER OWN MONEY," by Mark Swan, beyond a couple of scenes displaying a good eye to the foibles of humanity, and a rather original final curtain wherein the conventional embrace of the leading twain is reflected, from off-stage, in the embrace of the second string of characters who are awaiting the reunion of the first couple before cementing their own happiness, is a rather monotonous dissertation on the right of every wife to get an allowance from her mate without asking for it. (Also without working for it, which Mr. Swan overlooked.) "BELIEVE ME, XANTIPPE"—a moderately entertaining farce by Frederick Ballard, detailing the adventures of a fashionable young rashling who wagers that he can hide from the police, after committing a crime, for the space of a year.

And now come we to the music shows.

"SWEETHEARTS," with libretto by Harry B(lack) Smith and Robert B(lack) Smith, with kind assistance by the talented Madame Victor Maurel, brings to our ears again melodious measures from the pen of our foremost music show composer, Victor Herbert. The leading lady, Miss Christie Macdonald, like so many other singing ladies in our midst, blinks her eyes ceaselessly while engaging her larynx in the love ballads, believing that in so doing she heightens the "sentimental" quality of the songs and makes herself appear permeated with a pleasurable melancholy. Mr. Thomas McNaughton, the comic, has a witty scene where, as a laundry worker, he chases a wet piece of soap, that eludes his grasp, all over the stage, eventually capturing it with a butterfly net. The authors have indicated the "innocence" and "unworldliness" of Sylvia, their central character, by causing her to inquire of

her foster-mother in the first act: "Do geese have nests in the trees, mamma?" However, this point goes afoul of New York audiences, who know perfectly well, from their intimacy with bucolic matters, that geese always build their nests in the eaves of the farmhouses. On the whole, nevertheless, satisfactory pastime.

"LIEBER AUGUSTIN"—substantial music by Leo Fall. The princess and the daughter of the steward were accidentally exchanged at birth. The feature of the performance is the admirable voice of George MacFarlane. De Wolf Hopper, the star, is here a rather dolorous zany. Miss May De Sousa acts well, but has the evil habit of lopping off her vocal enunciation thuswise:

Rock a-bye baby on the tree top,
When the wind blows the cradle will rock.

"THE DOLL GIRL"—a botched version of Caillavet and De Fler's farce "Miquette et Sa Mère." Richard Carle and Miss Hattie Williams (the latter consistently improving year by year) in the central roles. Tunes commonplace. Lyrics ditto. The lyric at the finale of Act I is, in part, as follows—or, at least, this is the way it came over the footlights to my ears:

And now, what shall wextoranzotobylnmi,
We, he, allnippxtaepharentoblablyalone,
Ha, ha, yes, yes, topareeopdoswillgompp
And she will beprbggnowheredxytrozaveld
Ho, ho, theirdfaefararoundtheyblzartmyc,
For Pareeblymnandpareeglysketrozocr!

"ADELE," a well-mannered and thoroughly charming light entertainment by Jean Briquet, composer of "Alma," and Paul Herve. An aptly worked-out musical climax to the first act, finding its inspiration in Charpentier's "Louise" and a finale in the second act that displays as deft a combination of melody and comedy as the stage has shown in some time, are elements in the program's worth.

"WHEN DREAMS COME TRUE"—
"Please Go 'Way And Let Me Sleep."



MARIE CORELLI'S SPARRING PARTNER

By H. L. Mencken

PLOWING through a London autograph catalogue the other day, I came upon this item:

GISSING (Geo.) A. L.s., 2½ pp. £1 15s. I have been reading Hall Caine's new book, which has had such prodigious success. Either I am bemused with envy, or the clamorous praise of the reviewers is utterly preposterous. I am unable to find a single point in the book which merits high laudation; it seems to me always commonplace and often vapid.

Half sound criticism—but the other half the sneaking envy which Gissing himself suspected. The fact is that the reviews of Hall's triennial volumes of passion, poison and petrification seldom do him complete justice. The hand of every cornfed critic is against him. It is the fashion to make fun of him, to scoff at his carefully manufactured thrills, to wax satirical over his prodigies of press-agenting, to appraise his art in terms of his whiskers, to dismiss him as a mountebank, a Barnum, a literary Roosevelt. Even the new *Everyman's Encyclopedia*, otherwise an admirably judicious work, speaks of him contemptuously as the sparring partner of Marie Corelli.

Does he deserve all these superior sneers? A few of them, no doubt, but not all! Say that he is tawdry, that he wallows in the obvious, that he is apparently incapable of clear thinking, and you tell only the simple truth about him. But say that he is a bad writer, that he doesn't know his trade, that he gets the public's money by tricks requiring no honest skill, and you are wholly unfair to him. In sober truth, he is a highly accomplished and long-headed artisan, a virtuoso of the tried and true, a master of the stock situation, the orthodox senti-

ment, the popular style. He knows exactly what the public wants, and what is more important, he knows exactly what it *doesn't* want. And to possess that knowledge, and to be able to turn it into dollars and cents, year in and year out, regardless of competition and criticism, is to be a man of very respectable talents indeed.

His current book, "*THE WOMAN THOU GAVEST ME*" (*Lippincott*), is in his best and most characteristic manner. That is to say, it is a sort of compendium or boiling down of all the sloppy novels of the last hundred years—plus the suave, ingratiating personality of Hall himself. It is a circus in which all the lions are aged and toothless, and all the acrobats are helped out with wires, and all the spangles are full of verdigris, and all the clowns tell jokes out of Joe Miller—but with a brisk and elegantly barbed ringmaster cracking the whip. Massage your scalp until it bleeds, and you will not recall a single standard character or situation that is missing. See them troop into the ring: Bluebeard, Cinderella, Don Juan, Prince Charming, Hedda Gabler, Abelard and Heloise, Tom Jones, Col. Newcombe, King Lear, Jacob and Rachel, the Tombs Angel, the wicked earl, the cruel father, the honest Jack tar, the wife in name only, the osseocapital family solicitor, the faithful old priest, the innocent divorcée, the worldly bishop, the love child, the adventuress, the huzzahing villagers. Hall takes no chances: he wrings the vulgar with the problems and the pathos that have made them sweat and weep before; he takes them over all the old ground.

Here are dear and ancient friends: the intercepted letter, the loveless marriage, the midnight flight, the innocent adultery. Here is the tested stuff, the immemorial stuff, the sure stuff. And here it is with new frills, new magnetos, new sauces. A dash of mental telepathy, a pinch of white slavery, a drop or two of frenzied finance, a garnish of polar exploration—and behold, the Duchess and Augusta Evans have become Hall Caine! Is the Montessori method missing? Is there no mention of eugenics? Does one seek in vain for the initiative and referendum? Have patience, beloved! Hall is still in the prime of life. He will write other books. Besides, he has a certain conservatism, a fastidious disinclination for the too new. A novelty must prove its worth before he embalms it in his amber. He will reach the Montessori method along toward 1915, the recall of judicial decisions the year after, sex hygiene in 1917.

But what is "THE WOMAN THOU GAVEST ME" about? About everything under the sun! But more specifically, about the virtues and sufferings of Mary O'Neill, daughter to Daniel O'Neill, the harsh and beetle-browed old millionaire. Daniel makes his millions in America but comes back to the Isle of Ellan to spend them. First he buys a castle; then he buys a titled son-in-law—to wit, the libidinous Lord Raa. Mary protests against marrying this singularly immoral young man, but her Gothic father forces her into it. Her objections, however, continue unabated after the ceremony, and she succeeds in resisting her husband's disgusting advances. He consoles himself with Alma Lier, an American divorcée, and presently Mary herself falls in love with Martin Conrad, an antarctic explorer. The night before Martin sails for the Far South she visits his apartment. A row of stars. A year later we find her in London, hiding from her husband and father. Her money has run out and she is trying to support herself and her child by slaving in a sweatshop. A cruel employer discharges her. What to do? Another row of stars. It is night in Piccadilly. A pale, sad woman joins the parade of Marguerite

Gautiers. Discerning a tall, well dressed man approaching, she selects him for her début. As she halts him, a street lamp suddenly illuminates his face. He is Martin Conrad, home from the South Pole! "Mary! Mary! . . . Don't be afraid! It's I!"

Decent English, you will observe, even in a moment of supreme passion: not "It's me," but "It's I."

And so from end to end of the book, for all its nearly six hundred pages. That is precisely the secret of Hall Caine: he dishes up the old flubdub in a sanitary and professional manner. He knows what the people want; he knows what they have *always* wanted. He doesn't waste his time devising new and preposterous situations, in the fashion of our native McGraths and Chambersees. He doesn't try to invent new characters. Instead, he devotes all his energies to describing the old situations and the old characters in a new and superior way. In brief, he depends upon technique rather than upon inspiration. And he gets away with it, to borrow a phrase from vaudeville, because he actually has that technique, because he is a first rate journeyman fictioneer, because he really knows how to write. I defy any other popular novelist to tell the story of "THE WOMAN THOU GAVEST ME" without making it ridiculous. It runs close to burlesque in a score of places; it is full of dynamite. But Hall manages it without faltering; he squeezes every imaginable tear out of it; he lifts it over the bad places with admirable skill. . . . Let us laugh at the dear fellow less and praise him more. Say what you will against his taste, he at least accomplishes the thing that he sets out to do—he at least reaches the public diaphragm with unerring stroke. The result is not art, perhaps, but you will go wrong if you deny it all merit. . . . A very clever worker in paste and celluloid. The novelist foreordained for a people clad in near-silks and "mixed" woolens, and fed upon potted chicken made of bleached veal, and led by statesmen who steal one another's platforms. The Munyon of prose fiction.

Another gifted manufacturer of popu-

lar confectionery is Mrs. Gene Stratton-Porter, of Indiana, whose latest volume, "LADDIE" (*Doubleday-Page*), is crossing the 200,000 mark as I write. (But think of Caine's sales, as given in a sort of appendix to "THE WOMAN THOU GAVEST ME": 397,966 for "The Manxman," 458,427 for "The Bondman," 643,228 for "The Christian," 702,212 for "The Eternal City"!) The foundation of "LADDIE" (what a ghastly name for a hero!) is the ancient tale of Romeo Montague and Julia Capulet, but Mrs. Porter has given it a happy ending and added a number of well esteemed characters, including the Infant Terrible, the Innocent Condemned and Old Mother Hubbard. This, however, is not her only, nor even her chief addition to the literary *pot-au-feu*: what she principally contributes is a deft and delectable compound of homely humor and sweet, sweet sentiment—in brief, the sort of stuff that makes an honest American smile through his tears. This is what Americans most esteem in a humorist: the gift of pathos, the talent for concealing a sob in a snicker. That explains, I dare say, the success of such things as "Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch" and the national veneration for Dickens, despite his uncomfortable plain speaking in his serious moods; and it explains, too, the national distrust of satirists. The Puritanical feeling that mirth is somehow discreditable still lingers in the subcellars of the national consciousness. But if it can be given a moral, a sentimental, a lachrymal quality, then it escapes excommunication. Mrs. Porter, like the estimable Caine, is a highly dexterous performer. She writes so well, indeed, that large sections of her book have genuine merit as prose fiction. It is only when she sets the old machinery in motion and exposes the fundamental banality of her "story" that she becomes commonplace and tedious.

The Capulets and the Montagues appear again in "OTHERWISE PHYLLIS," by Meredith Nicholson (*Houghton-Mifflin*), and again the scene is Indiana. This time, however, we are not among country folk, but among the proud aristocrats of a town of fifteen thousand souls.

Phyllis Kirkwood, the heroine, is a very charming young lady, indeed, and the scenes she adorns are unmistakably mid-Western. If you liked Mr. Nicholson's "A Hoosier Chronicle," you will like this second serving from the same kettle.

The somewhat rare quality of gusto, so visible in all of Meredith and most of Henry James, gives distinction to "THE DUST OF THE ROAD," by Marjorie Patterson (*Holt*), as it did to her first novel, the bouncing and *prestissimo* "Fortunata," that bolt from the blue of yesteryear. I say "rare"—and weep for the fact. Most of our current Zolas and Jane Austens have the manner of surgeons cutting off ears, even when engaged upon ostensibly humorous fabling. One somehow gets the impression that literary composition is painful to them, whatever its rewards and usufructs—that they get little genuine pleasure out of the society of their characters. A department store best seller, otherwise fairly done, is often tedious and depressing for that reason alone. Go to Thackeray or Dickens and you will find a different air. Thackeray glows and bubbles from end to end of "Vanity Fair," even in the midst of scandals and tragedies, and Dickens is plainly tickled immensely with "Nicholas Nickleby." So, too, with Meredith, James, Hewlett, Anatole France, H. G. Wells and even the bilious George Moore, not to mention many lesser fellows. The chief charm of such a thing as Josef Viktor von Scheffel's "Ekkehard" lies in the beaming enjoyment of the author, his evident delight in his people and their doings, his sly way of cocking his eye at them. I needn't point to "Diana of the Crossways" and "What Maisie Knew," nor to "Tono-Bungay" and "Ann Veronica." But have you ever noticed how much the merit of Arnold Bennett depends upon the gusto of Bennett? Whenever he is having a high old time himself, as in "Clayhanger," for example (or, better still, in "Whom God Hath Joined," perhaps the best of all his books), the tale he tells is full of attraction, but when his delight seems to flag, as in "Hilda Lessways," his chronicle grows heavy for the rest of us. The same

thing holds true in music. Johann Sebastian Bach was one of the few human beings who ever *enjoyed* writing fugues, and so his—

But to return to "THE DUST OF THE ROAD." Its background is English theatrical life, and its central personage, Antoinette Meredith, is an American girl who escapes from a highly respectable home to tempt fortune on the boards. This Antoinette is no beauty, but her head is full of wit and her heart is full of hope, and the two in combination make her get on. First a year of hard (and largely useless) labor at the Paris Conservatoire, learning how to kiss, to fall in a faint, to hear bad news, to view a corpse, to sneeze, to accept the proposal of an elderly marquis with stiff knees—and then a glorious and happy year in an English touring company, beginning as a Roman apple woman in "Julius Cæsar" and ending with one thrilling performance in a leading part. Ambition rises in Antoinette. She sees herself a London star, her name upon all the hoardings. She resolves to sacrifice every other end and aim of life to that one alone. In particular, she resolves to sacrifice the high privilege of virtuous love. She will remain a vestal in the temple of art, a celibate sworn and sealed, a foe forever to disturbers of the peace in pantaloons.

Enter David Hearn, a successful sculptor turned second rate actor. Like Antoinette, David has a poor opinion of amour. What is worse, he has a poor opinion of Antoinette, and she of him. They clash on tour, each offering free and unflattering judgments upon the other, and when they return to London they keep it up. David wants it to be distinctly understood that neither Antoinette nor any other Lorelei is ever going to lure him to monogamous destruction, and Antoinette is full of certainty that art is incompatible with matrimony. One day they meet to talk it over, to exchange defiance, to explain why it is that they dislike each other, with the utmost frankness and particularity. Bit by bit they come closer, denouncing, snarling, protesting. Accidentally the curls of Antoinette blow

free and sweep David along the collarbone. On the instant, an electric current of 200,000 volts passes from one to the other. David's arm shoots out and encircles Antoinette's neck. Antoinette falls toward David with the slow, graceful motion of an oak struck by lightning. A labial coalescence, prolonged, suffocating, astounding. Anon they step back, outraged and out of breath. "Your fault!" exclaims David. "I despise you!" says Antoinette.

Benedick and Beatrice! The oldest story in the world! So it is—but Miss Patterson gives it a new setting, new people, new humors. The story itself, indeed, is unimportant to her book: its charm lies in its vivacious pictures of English stage life. You must go back to Tom Dibdin's reminiscences to find a more delightful company of mummies—Gregers Webster, the actor-manager, with his dogged fidelity to the classical repertoire; The Mondragonie, born Potts, with her romantic tales of past debaucheries, her grotesque yearning to shine as a polyandrist; Esmé Eglantine, the whining and womanish leading man; old Granny Firkin, the ancient of the company, a helpless cripple on the street but a grand dame on the stage; Ham and Ham, Jr., the infant Rosciuses; Ruth Latimar, the leading lady, voluptuous, Oriental, intriguing; Mrs. Jinks, the boozy wardrobe woman; Patsy Grogarty, manipulator of the wind machine, and all the rest of them. Miss Patterson takes an obvious delight in these strange creatures, and that delight is contagious. They are by no means mere burlesques; their feet are on the ground; they are always assertively real. And real, too, are the situations in which they are depicted—comic tragedians in the countless melodramas which forever go on behind the scenes. The first half of the book is given over to the tour, and it is the better half, and by long odds. A sharp and amusing study of the actor's life, the actor's hopes and griefs, the actor's point of view.

Miss Patterson's outstanding defect is a weakness for physical catastrophe. In "Fortunata," if I remember rightly, the heroine went to pieces; in the present

story the hero loses an arm. What is worse, there is no excuse whatever for this banal device: its sole effect, indeed, is to drop a brisk and delightful comedy to the level of obvious sentimentality. Once they have performed that first, unwilling kiss, Antoinette and David are bound together with hoops of steel. True enough, they still protest, struggle and flee in alarm. But why sacrifice poor David's arm to bring them together again? Why not depend upon our old friend, the Life Force? It is working day and night, you may be sure. It is not daunted by distance, resistance, logic, high resolves. It doesn't care a darn for Antoinette and David, as sentient individuals: it is thinking of the mute, undifferentiated little Tonys and Davys of the infinite future. Miss Patterson does serious damage to her story by burdening it with bloodshed and fustian at the close. She hurts it, too, by her inept handling of several minor personages—particularly Antoinette's father, the genealogical Virginian. But allowing for all this, it remains a very lively and entertaining tale. Not many of its quality have come to me this unlucky year.

Comes now Prof. Henry Albert Phillips, whose "The Plot of the Short Story" I reviewed a year or so ago, with a new volume on "ART IN SHORT STORY NARRATION" (Stanhope-Dodge). The "art" of which Prof. Phillips speaks is indistinguishable from those of the upholsterer, cornetist and embalmer: more accurate persons would call it a craft, or trade, perhaps even a vice. Its aim seems to be, not to find a path to self-expression, but merely to manufacture a marketable commodity. And in laying down its lofty principles the Professor makes liberal use of such platitudes as are adapted to the tastes and comprehension of the bucolic aspirant. For example, "Imagination is truly the heart of thought life." For example, "The artist becomes, in a large sense, a creator." For example, "True art is always useful." Also, he finds it agreeable to adorn his treatise with the preposterous maxims of Sunday school morality. I quote but one: "Sexual desire and love

should remain a proscribed theme in fiction just so long as it [*sic*] continues to be a proscribed practice [*sic*] in society." Just where the society is that proscribes this "sexual desire and love" the learned pundit does not tell us, nor does he tell us what would become of prose fiction if "it" were barred out. My own impression, gained by a somewhat assiduous reading of current fables, is that "it" is their sole excuse and basis. I do not recall a popular novel for five years past in which the whole action did not revolve frankly around the pursuit of a coquettish virgin by a determined fellow with fire in his eyes, nor do I recall one in which he failed, in the last chapter, to break down her defenses. Art moves onward and upward, true enough—even the art of the department store fictioneer. It is no longer considered necessary to append a chapter (separated by a row of stars) in which the fair young bride whispers a thrilling secret (why a secret?) into the bridegroom's ear, or in which the latter shamelessly bounces a son and heir upon his knee. That fashion was Victorian; it disappeared a decade ago. But the fact still remains by implication. It is still assumed that such things happen. And my free advice to Prof. Phillips's pupils is that they remember it when they seize their pens in hand.

Edwin Björkman's "VOICES OF TOMORROW" (Kennerley) is given value by a somewhat elaborate biographical account of August Strindberg, perhaps the best yet printed in English, but when it comes to criticism Mr. Björkman often lays down doctrines that are far more creditable to his heart than to his head. For example, when he says of Strindberg's "Inferno" that "in all the world's literature there is not another book quite its equal," and that "it is a document that must enter as one of the foundation stones of our coming understanding of the human mind." The truth is, of course, that "Inferno" is merely the record of a harmless lunatic's maundings and delusions, and that the intellectual qualities it exhibits are midway between those of a Christian Science First Reader and those of a prominent Odd Fellow. "Some day," says Mr.

Björkman, "the world will know what a treasure trove of suggestive ideas lies hidden among Strindberg's scientific and philosophical speculations, even when they appear most fantastic." I doubt it seriously—save, perhaps, in the sense that the Medical Freedomists of today have found portentous truths in the balderdash of Paracelsus and the other alchemists. Strindberg's knowledge of chemistry was like an osteopath's knowledge of pathology: a compound of nine parts of guessing to one of fact. And his so-called philosophy made a Swedenborgian of him in the end—a significant indication of its acuteness. Some of the other authors that Mr. Björkman deals with are Björnson, Joseph Conrad, Bergson, Maeterlinck and Francis Grierson. Of Conrad he says: "More serious is his disregard of the modern demand that the course of events involved in the tale shall be seen through the eyes of a single personality, and that nothing shall be told but what could naturally be known to that one observer. He has frankly assumed the position and knowledge of an omniscient creator, to whom not only the actions but even the thoughts of every actor in the drama lie wholly open." Well, why not? What competent authority has ever formulated the absurd "demand" that Mr. Björkman mentions? Supposing it to have force, what would become of "Ethan Frome," "McTeague," "Jennie Gerhardt," "Evelyn Innes," "The Lake"? What of "Germinal," "The Golden Bowl," "The Brothers Karamazov"? Certainly, it would be difficult to raise a more absurd objection to the greatest novelist now writing in English.

That argument for the reading of plays which I lately made in this place finds eloquent support in "THE FOUNDATIONS OF A NATIONAL DRAMA," by Henry Arthur Jones (*Doran*). Mr. Jones has been voicing it, indeed, for many a long year, and he has proved his sincerity by printing practically all of his own plays. If you have never read his "Joseph Entangled," which is to be had in good cloth at seventy-five cents, you have missed one of the most delightful comedies of the modern English rep-

ertoire. And in the same edition you can get many other excellent plays of his—"Mrs. Dane's Defense," "The Liars" and "The Hypocrites" among them. On the badness of actors Mr. Jones is an expert witness: it has cost him many a fat royalty cheque. At a recent theatrical gathering in London, he says, "Sarah Bernhardt was the only speaker in English who could be distinctly heard at the back of a small hall." The rest, I dare say, chewed and gargled their words, as they do on the stage, and most of them probably added to the crime by posturing like young preachers. Mr. Jones has a long chapter on the reading of plays, and constantly recurs to the subject elsewhere in his book. Another propaganda which he carries on is that for state aid to the drama. This is an accomplished commonplace on the Continent, but politicians have always fought shy of it in Great Britain and the United States, and perhaps with sound instinct. Our theaters are bad enough as it is: they would no doubt be ten times worse if a Tammany leader sat in the manager's office and the comedians were selected at primary elections. We are not yet civilized enough to touch the fine arts without polluting them: even our hospitals and public libraries still feel the blight of politics. But our millionaires, who serve us in place of a cultured ruling caste, may yet come to the rescue. True enough, they made a mess of the New Theater, but that was merely a try-out. In the allied art of music, they have accomplished something worth while—if not at the Metropolitan Opera House, then at least at Symphony Hall in Boston.

Of printed plays themselves a few keep trickling in, the most striking of them being "THE QUANDARY," by J. Rosett (*Phenix Press*), an author who made a creditable début a year or so ago with "The Middle Class." Dr. Rosett commits the unpardonable indiscretion of putting ideas into his dramas, and so the ex-haberdashers and candy butchers who run our theaters fight shy of him, but if he keeps on he will make a reading public for himself, and along toward 1920 some daring revolutionists will begin to produce him. One of the ideas he

gets into his present play is this: that virtue is an expensive luxury for a man as well as for a woman. Nothing could be more horrifying to the Sunday school moralists. They are willing enough to grant that the girl who goes wrong is forced into it by the low wages of Messrs. Zangwill & Wogglebaum, and some of them even insist that this is the sole imaginable motive power, but any argument that economic necessity drives the male the same way gives a swift upward roll to their eyes. Yet this is what the contumacious Rosett preaches: (a) that lawful monogamy is often made difficult by financial considerations, and (b) that strict celibacy is made difficult by biological considerations. This and other notions are in his play. I do not undertake to go into them more specifically. He sets them forth very frankly, but without the slightest hint of nastiness. Here, indeed, he does better than Brieux, and besides, he is less platitudinous. His work is still full of clumsiness, but he is going the right way.

"TIGER," by Witter Bynner (*Kennerley*), is vice crusade flubdub. A young girl, kidnapped by white slavers of the standard model, is held for a favored client. When he bobs up, it turns out that he is her father! The thing is written in bad blank verse. No doubt it will delight the pious almost as much as Miss Robins's "My Little Sister," or the vermilion shockers of Reginald Wright Kauffman. Already, in fact, the story of "TIGER" is being ladled out as authentic, and even typical, by various pornographers of the pulpit, and multitudes of old maids of both sexes are shuddering and slobbering over it. The Vice Crusade, among the other effects, has had this one: that it has made churchgoing almost as thrilling as the slumming of yesteryear. There are certain evangelical chapels in this fair land, indeed, in which the principal discourse is of bawds and brothels. Such is the New Thought!

"THE CROWD," by Gerald Stanley Lee (*Doubleday-Page*), is a fat volume of some five hundred pages, filled to the brim with vague, windy mush. The rev. gent.—he is, I believe, in holy orders—performs in the best sacerdotal man-

ner. That is to say, he clothes commonplace—and often downright silly—thoughts in ornate and stuffy garments, and so gives them a false air of importance. He is always announcing the obvious in terms of the revolutionary, and with all the typographical trappings of a blood-tub dime novel. The astounding discovery that every man has a Theory of the World—why did he overlook *weltanschauung*, that juicy term?—is set off in a separate paragraph. We are knocked in the head with the news that "the main fact of biology as regards man is that he can be born." Such words as business, government, money, world, trust and hope, and even news, tree and store, are set in capitals, apparently to make them blast and penetrate the cranial ivory. We are told that "a Tree is a flowing diagram," that "unimaginative and inartistic people do not know what they want," that "the only way fine things can be tried long enough is with sufficient capital," that "only religion works." We hear about the Economic Machine, Whirling Unbelief, the Sidewalk of Truth, the Golden Rule, Before and After Taking, the Meat Trust, the Blackness, the Lonely Hunger and all the other familiar scarecrows and hobgoblins of the Uplift. The author describes for us, with great particularity, just where and when this or that Great Thought was hatched in him—how he sat on a bench in the zoo at Regent's Park on a day in 1911 and achieved the staggering idea that "possibly people are as different from one another inside, in their souls at least, as different as these animals are"; how he once walked down Fleet Street to Ludgate Hill and was flabbergasted by the sudden riddle, "Where are we going?" And toward the end, he announces the greatest discovery of all, to wit: "America is not a formula. America is not statistics, even graphic statistics. A great nation cannot be made, cannot be discovered, and then be laid coldly together like a census. America is a Tune."

Well, well, don't laugh too soon! The odds are that "Crowds" will have a large sale in our fair republic, and that the virgin reviewers will hail the author

as a profound and penetrating thinker. The New Thought is now triumphant among us: the way to get a reputation for sagacity is to translate platitudes into mystical rumblebumble. That exhorter whose meaning is plain at first hearing, that propagandist who thinks his thoughts out clearly and puts them into sound and simple English, has a hard time catching the crowd. The taste of the moment is for more subtle and puzzling stuff—for nonsensical gabble about Avatars, Oversouls and Zeit-geists, for copybook maxims with their eyebrows penciled and feathers stuck in their hats, for long rows of meaningless italics and capitals, for mellow, Maeterlinckian cadenzas on penny whistles. The platitudinous flapdoodle of the Rev. Dr. Orison Swett Marden sells better than Huxley's Essays; I could name a dozen New Thought books that have outsold even the worst of our popular novels. Americans show a childish weakness for sonorous and empty words, for the shallow tricks of typography. Reprint the editorials of Herbert Kaufman in ordinary type, and even a Knight of Pythias would sense their vacuity. The people, set in lower case, are no more than a rabble of beery *ignobile*, smelling of sweat and boiled potatoes; but put them into caps and make them The People (as the Rev. Dr. Lee does), and at once they become a flock of archangels, crammed to the gills with virtue and sapience. And so with the Interests, the Money Power, the Invisible Government, the Subconscious, the Demon Rum and all the other vermillion bulls in the New Thought pasture. Such creatures are merely hound dogs in red shirts. But they scare and enchant the vulgar, and so it is a profitable business to exhibit them and make them jump.

"JOHN BARLEYCORN," by Jack London (*Century Co.*), is marked by the two qualities which give Mr. London a peculiar distinction: extraordinarily brilliant writing and extraordinarily jejune and fallacious thinking. The book is a frank confession of personal combats with old

John (not uncontaminated by justifiable boasting!), and its gradual *crescendo* leads to a prohibition stump speech at the end. The prime cause of the liquor evil, says London, is the deadly saloon, that private office of the devil, with its alluring warmth, its inviting red lights, its large, shiny spittoons, its promise of good company and *gemütlichkeit*. Not one man in a hundred thousand is born with a thirst for alcohol. To the great majority it is distasteful at the start, even more so than tobacco. The neophyte swallows it merely because he wants to be sociable, because all the men he knows and likes are swallowers, because their swallowing is done amid scenes of ease and glitter, and to the tune of automatic pianos and persiflage. *Ergo*, the way to stop the swallowing is to shut up the saloon. Abolish the seductive *gemütlichkeit* and you have abolished the one genuine temptation to wrestle with John. . . . A fine theory, to be sure, and one voiced full oft by loud wizards of the Chautauquas, but alas, what holes are in it! *Imprimis*, how are you going to abolish the saloon? The majority of sinners want it; the majority of sinners get what they want. The pious have been abolishing the saloon in Maine for sixty years, but it still flourishes amazingly as the blind pig. And elsewhere, too, it has resisted all the celestial artillery, from simple anathemas to federal injunctions. As Mr. London himself admits, it serves a human need, it satisfies a human appetite. And before it may go, "some other institution will have to obtain, some other congregating place of men where strange men and stranger men may get in touch, and meet and know." Well, what is that "other institution" to be? Who has invented it? Where is it being tried? . . . To these questions, the author of "JOHN BARLEYCORN" has no answers, and so his fine structure of argument has sandy soil beneath it. But how beautifully he writes! How his sentences hiss and sing! What an ear he has for nervous, vibrant, bouncing English!

